

THE SIR DOUGLAS ROBB LECTURES 1970

The Orthodox Churches  
and the Secular State

STEVEN RUNCIMAN

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## THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES

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## PREFACE

In September 1970, I had the honour of giving the Sir Douglas Robb Lectures at the University of Auckland. This book is based on the four lectures that I delivered there. Being no longer restricted by the time-limit that a conscientious lecturer must observe, or by the need to divide the subject into four parts of equal length, I have made certain additions, especially in the later chapters, to clarify the story, and have appended a short final chapter.

In this book I have attempted to give some explanation of the attitude of the Orthodox Churches today towards the problems that face them. Western Christians, with a moral rigidity that nothing in their history has obliged them to modify, have always been ready to condemn the Orthodox for subservience to secular authority, to infidel and despotic masters in the past and to atheistical and even more despotic masters today. But the experience and the traditions of Eastern Christendom differ from those of the West, especially over the relations of Church and State. Unless we try to understand them and the values derived from them, we have no right to make criticisms. I am well aware that no one who has not been brought up in the Orthodox Church can fully comprehend its outlook. Without that background sympathy and interest cannot quite suffice. I am aware, too, that I may have made generalizations with which a considerable minority of Orthodox believers will not agree. But I hope that, in spite of many sins of omission, and doubtless sins of commission also, this book may give a slightly clearer insight into the Orthodox ordeal. We must pray that Orthodoxy will survive and renew itself; but in its struggle it has need of the understanding and the good will of all Christian folk.

It would overload a short book covering so wide a span to attempt to give full reference notes. I have therefore only attempted to give for each chapter a short list of the chief

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sources and modern works which I have used and which may be of help to readers who wish to go more deeply into any aspect of the subject.

I am deeply grateful to the University of Auckland for having allowed me, in very pleasant circumstances, to voice my views on a question that is, I believe, of both historical and contemporary importance.

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Elshieshields, Dumfriesshire.

January 1971.

## I

## THE BYZANTINE HERITAGE

In these days of oecumenical endeavour, when men of good will throughout the world are seeking and praying for Christian unity, we need to understand the nature of those Churches whose co-operation we desire. No union can be reached unless we take into account the special position of each branch of Christendom, its achievements and its problems, and, above all, the spirit which guides its actions and its thoughts.

Of all the present-day movements towards intercommunion none seems more hopeful than that which is drawing together the Protestant Episcopal Churches and those Churches of Eastern Christendom which are usually known by their own name of Orthodox, a group of autonomous but allied Churches whose senior hierarch is the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Oecumenical Patriarch. But complete intercommunion has not yet been canonically achieved; and there are many good Protestants who are not happy at the idea of a closer connection with the Orthodox. The Christians of the West have always been suspicious of the Christians of the East; and since the early middle ages the Greeks in particular have been suspected by Westerners of being devious, crafty and corrupt. We may smile at such prejudices, which are due above all to the nefarious influence of the great poet Virgil. More serious is the charge that the Eastern Churches are in a state of decline, that their numbers are diminishing and that they have submitted themselves far too easily to the rule of godless masters.

Indeed, the history of Eastern Christendom is not encouraging. In the fourth century of our era, at the time of the Triumph of the Cross under Constantine the Great, the vast majority of Christians lived in what were then the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor. Now those provinces are all under Muslim rulers, and only a handful of Christians remain in them. In the early middle ages Orthodoxy was compensated for the loss of Egypt and Syria by its conversion of the people of the Balkan peninsula and of the vast territories of the Russians. But today Russia and the Balkan states are ruled by governments whose ideology is profoundly hostile to religion. Greece itself, after centuries of Muslim domination, is now the only independent Orthodox country under an Orthodox government that remains, apart from the island of Cyprus where an active Muslim minority limits the government's authority; and the present masters of Greece keep a political control of the Church tighter than any exercised by the most autocratic of Byzantine Emperors. There are free and vigorous communities of the Orthodox to be found in the lands of the Diaspora, in Western Europe, in Africa, in Australasia and above all in the Americas. But there each subsequent generation is tempted by the pressure of its surroundings to slip away from the old traditions. Is such a Church, with its long history of enslavement and decline, worthy of our respect? Should it not have put up a braver fight against the Muslims in the past and the Communists in our own time? The Orthodox seem to accept the Commissar with the same meekness with which they used to accept the minions of the Sultan. Does their Church deserve to survive?

A formidable indictment could be drawn up on these lines which might convince a Western observer. But the criticism fails to appreciate the traditions and experience of the Orthodox Church, and its essential spirit in its views of the world. The relations between Church and State pose a fundamental problem in every country where Christians are to be found; and there is a similar problem wherever religion, whatever it may be, plays a part in people's lives. To Christians the only sanctioned guidance for answering the problem lies in the words of Christ:

'Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.' St Paul added that magistrates were to be treated with respect and obedience, and St Peter ordered the faithful to 'honour the King', even though the king in his day was the pagan Roman Emperor. The message seems to be that Christians should be law-abiding citizens, submitting to the lay authorities, whoever they may be, so long as the religious life can be pursued. But where is the frontier between daily life and religious life, between Caesar's empire and God's, to be drawn? Must the Christian support a government that rules godlessly? Is he to obey rulers whose behaviour outrages the moral laws on which Christian behaviour is based? If he is prevented from carrying out his religious duties and practices and fulfilling his religious life, then surely he must protest, even at the risk of suffering martyrdom. But can he indulge in civil disobedience because his comrades are being persecuted? And can he risk the lives of his fellow Christians and the whole existence of the Church by making protests that will have no practical effect other than to provoke reprisals?

The early Christians had no wish to meddle in politics; and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus showed them what might happen if they tried to follow the Jewish example. The Roman authorities were on the whole tolerant. There were long periods when the Christian communities were left to go their own way. But the Emperors did not care for anything that seemed to be a secret society, and they disliked some of the social teachings of the Christians, who were, for example, inclined to give slaves ideas above their station in life. Nero considered them to be a socially dangerous sect and made them the scapegoats for the great fire of Rome. Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius considered them smug and unwilling to co-operate with the State. There was occasional persecution. Christians who aggressively asserted their religious and social doctrines were liable to be put to death. It could perhaps be argued that these holy martyrs were in fact overstepping the limits laid down in the New Testament. The Church did not particularly encourage martyrdom. The blood of the martyrs may be the seed of the Church, as Tertullian declared. But if you have too many martyrs there

will not be any Church left. It is wise to render unto Caesar as much as possible in order that the Church can survive and develop in peace.

The real testing time came with the persecutions of Decius in the later third century and those of Diocletian two generations later. The Church was now a powerful and well organized body; and both Emperors saw it as a danger to their conception of the State. They both wished to arrest the spiritual decline of Rome by reviving the ancient religion and coupling it with the Imperial power. Every citizen was to conform and show his conformity by making a token sacrifice to the Emperor as representative of the gods. This was a direct challenge to the Christian faith. Could a Christian obey the order? If he refused he might suffer death; and in the meantime the authorities demanded that Christian sacred books should be handed over to them. Many Christians nobly underwent martyrdom; but there were bishops and priests who felt that their first duty was to protect and preserve their congregations. They handed over the books. Some even made the token sacrifice. When the persecutions ended there was bitter criticism of the clerics who had compromised with the State. The stricter of the faithful denounced them as *traditores*, traitors, who had forfeited the grace that they had received on their ordination. There was a theological point here: could a bishop ever lose the grace bestowed on him when he was taken into the apostolic succession? And there was a practical point: was he to be condemned for seeking to protect his flock? The Church in its wisdom decided that a bishop could not lose his charismatic power, and that God's infinite mercy would forgive the backslider whose motives were good. The decision created schism. Both Novatian in the third century and Donatus in the fourth led parties that would not accept it. The Novatianists and, still more, the Donatists caused trouble to the Church until they died out. But it is worth noting that both sects drew their strength from the West, from North Africa in particular. The East was more elastic and less dogmatic in its approach. Indeed, the decision was the first important instance of the application of a doctrine that the Eastern Church has always held dear, the doctrine of Economy: a word which means

literally the proper running of the house, and hence, theologically, the divine management of the world, but which came to be used, like the word 'dispensation', to convey the notion that the divine grace could overlook sins and errors if thereby the interests of Christendom were helped. It is Economy that enables the Orthodox today to overlook certain incorrect doctrines held by their Anglican friends.

The Triumph of the Cross under Constantine inevitably changed the situation. The distinction between Caesar's things and God's became blurred when Caesar was accepted as God's representative on earth. The Christian Roman Empire which Constantine founded, and which we usually call 'Byzantine' because he gave it a new capital on the site of old Byzantium, was an empire in which, ideally, Church and State were completely merged. It was the commonwealth of the faithful, the Oecumene, or inhabited world, at whose head was the divinely appointed Emperor. The ideal was short-lived. As the centuries passed more and more Christians lived under the rule of other potentates, not all of them Christian and scarcely any of them admitting the suzerainty of the Emperor. Yet, though it grew shrunken and enfeebled, so long as it lasted, right up to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, it was still in the eyes of the Orthodox the Holy Empire and its Emperor the divinely ordained sovereign of all true Christians.

The Byzantine system left an indelible mark upon Eastern Christendom. Historians are fond of describing it as Caesaropapist, with the Emperor and Pope combined in one person. In theory this should have been so. In theory the Empire was the earthly copy of Heaven, with the Emperor and his Court, dwelling in the Sacred Palace, surrounded by a ritual that was almost as liturgical as a church service, being the pale imitations of God and the Heavenly Host. In fact the Emperor was circumscribed by his mortality and his mortal weaknesses. The office was holy, not the man. He was, so to speak, an actor playing an exalted role; and if he were thought to be unworthy of the role, he would be dismissed. Its sanctity would not save him personally. Moreover, though he was God's viceroy, his Empire was the heir of pagan Rome, with its great tradition of Law, and of

pagan Greece with its taste for political philosophy. The legal basis of his earthly power was the semi-fictitious *Lex de Imperio* by which the People of Rome had transferred their sovereignty to Augustus Caesar. He was the elect of the People. The Senate, by now an informal body of high officials and magnates, and the Army claimed also to be electors. At the coronation ceremony, where he was crowned by the Patriarch, acting not only as chief priest but also chief magistrate of the Empire, he was acclaimed by representatives of the Senate and the Army, and by the People when he emerged from the church. In theory he was the Autocrat. He alone could interpret, implement and amend the Law. But he was under the Law, and, still more, his powers were limited by public opinion. If he proved to be a poor general the army would willingly switch its allegiance to an abler candidate. If he were an incompetent administrator the bureaucracy would usually arrange for a palace revolution. If his conduct offended the masses they would rise up and drag him from the throne. The holy Emperor would be hounded to death by his pious subjects. And, though the clergy took no official part in the lay administration, they formed the strongest force in moulding public opinion.

In the West when we speak of the Church, we usually mean the ecclesiastical organization. To the Easterner the Church always means the whole body of the faithful, the 'holy catholic church' of the Creed, or at least the faithful of his own persuasion. There are historical reasons for this. When the Roman Empire in the West collapsed under the stress of the Barbarian Invasions, the old secular life faded out. Government officials, lawyers and schoolmasters disappeared. It was the ecclesiastical organization alone that preserved the ancient culture and that could provide the lawyers, accountants, secretaries and teachers without whom law, administration and education would have foundered. It was only the cleric—or 'clerk'—that could read and write. Not unnaturally the clergy were considered to be a class of the élite, a holy class separate from and superior to the laity. They became in ordinary parlance 'the Church'. A further result in the West was that the Church, in order to carry out its high role, had to be well organized and had to aim at unity, at

a monolithic structure, so as to keep together the congregations in the many various states that had arisen out of the Barbarian Invasions; and, for this reason, and because of the many clerics who were trained lawyers, it began to acquire legalistic tendencies. It liked not only a tidy organization but also clear-cut decisions in matters of faith. It liked fixed and binding formulae that would elucidate belief. It stood for unity and precision; and it felt a certain disdain for the boorish lay powers which were so dependent upon its help.

In the Eastern half of the Roman Empire things moved in a different direction. The barbarians never penetrated into the seat of government; and many of the provinces were unharmed for some centuries to come. The old secular life could continue. The bureaucracy, the law and higher education all remained in secular hands. The intellectual élite of the Eastern Empire was composed mainly of laymen; indeed many of the best East Christian theologians were laymen, or educated as laymen. The clergy were specially trained to perform the mysteries, just as lawyers were trained to administer the law; and though their ordination gave them a special grace it did not set them entirely apart from their flocks. It is significant that communion in both kinds was always administered to the laity as well as to the clergy throughout the Orthodox world.

In the East, too, as the Emperor was the symbol of unity, there was less need for a monolithic Church organization. Whereas the Western provinces were all part of the Patriarchate of Rome, in the East there were four Patriarchates, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem; and though Constantinople headed the four in rank, as the seat of the capital, as New Rome, its Patriarch had no authority over his fellow-Patriarchs, and therefore could not see why the Bishop of Old Rome should claim authority. The Roman pontiff was given special respect by the Eastern Churches as the senior Patriarch, *primus inter pares*, until he forfeited the position in their eyes by his political pretensions and his unilateral addition to the Creed. The title of Oecumenical Patriarch which John the Faster of Constantinople assumed at the end of the sixth century, to the fury of Pope Gregory the Great, gave him no world-wide

authority but was meant to signify that he was Patriarch of the territory of the Orthodox Empire, which its citizens with philological inaccuracy now called the Oecumene; he was bishop of the Oecumenical capital.

In theory the organization of the Orthodox Churches was democratic. The clergy of the diocese elected the bishop, the bishops of the province elected the archbishop or metropolitan, and the metropolitans, together with the high officials of the Patriarchate, formed the Holy Synod which elected the Patriarch and served as his privy council without whose co-operation he could not act. In practice in Byzantine times the electors would bow to the wishes of their superiors. The Patriarch, and at times the Emperor himself, would nominate bishops and metropolitans; and though the Emperor was supposed to choose the Patriarch from three names submitted to him by the Holy Synod, he often disregarded their nominees and chose someone else: whom the Synod then meekly endorsed. The Synod would also, though less meekly, depose a Patriarch at the Emperor's orders; but such depositions were apt to cause a schism within the Church, and the Emperor had to move cautiously. There was no legally binding constitution. The hierarchy was there to maintain order and discipline. Insistence was always put on the charismatic equality of bishops. The theological pronouncements of a Patriarch—or of an Emperor—would be listened to with respect, but they had no overriding validity. Doctrine could only be defined by a Council of all the bishops of the Church, or their accredited representatives. It must be an oecumenical Council. Then, it was hoped, the Holy Spirit would descend, as at Pentecost, to enlighten the assembled faithful. This involved a unanimous decision; and it was sometimes necessary hastily to depose dissident bishops before the final vote was taken.

The basic attitude of the Orthodox towards doctrine was, and is, what theologians now call apophatic or negative. The cataphatic theologian makes positive statements about doctrine. The apophatic theologian only knows that he knows nothing, for if he knew all about God he would be God's equal. He can only accept the knowledge that has been revealed to him by the Holy Scriptures, by the inspired rulings of the Oecumenical

Councils, and by the Tradition handed down from Apostolic times—and Tradition in the East has always been far stronger and more reliable than in the West. This is supplemented by the pronouncements of the Fathers of the Church, or of such of the Fathers as were generally accepted as having been divinely inspired; but as the Fathers did not always agree with each other, some caution was required here. The apophatic attitude might be discarded when a traditional dogma was challenged and rival interpretations were put forward. Then there would be bitter controversy and fierce debate to decide upon the exact wording that would define the true faith, as over the nature of Christ in the fifth and sixth centuries or over the theory of mysticism in the fourteenth; and when the Western Church added the word 'filioque' to the Creed as it had been laid down by the Second Oecumenical Council the East was outraged. But there are still many dogmas on which the Orthodox Church has no fixed views: as over the question of Purgatory—for how can we know what God intends for us after our deaths?—or over the nature of the change in the elements at the Eucharist, which is a mystery that our human minds cannot understand. When in the late seventeenth century some Anglican divines contemplated negotiations for union with the Orthodox, they were continually irritated because they could not find out what the Orthodox really believed about the Sacrament. In fact there was no obligatory Orthodox dogma on the matter; and some bishops therefore gave their own personal views while others said what they thought would please their questioners. Again, though the Orthodox have since the end of the middle ages accepted the doctrine of seven Sacraments, there is still a feeling that only Baptism and the Eucharist are of primary importance. The other Sacraments have not the same force. The Orthodox attitude towards divorce is thus much less rigid than the Roman. Apart from St John of Damascus's *Fountain of Wisdom*, written in the eighth century, there is no wholly accepted encyclopaedia of Orthodox doctrine; and there are many matters which St John did not discuss. Later statements have been issued, such as the so-called *Confession of Dositheus* (1672), which have been pronounced as being fully Orthodox; but it is not necessary to



subscribe to every detail in them. To the Orthodox many doctrines are better left as a mystery. This imprecision, together with his use of Economy, gives the Orthodox believer an elasticity in his belief which the Westerner with his liking for precision and certainty finds hard to understand and suspects of lacking integrity.

The imprecision was largely due to the suspicion that Orthodox theologians felt towards secular philosophy and logic. The Byzantines admired the intellect and were proud of their Greek intellectual heritage. They were conscious of its lure, which could be dangerous, and were therefore anxious that the Inner Learning, which was theology, should not be contaminated by the Outer Learning, which included philosophy and logic. On the whole the two learnings were satisfactorily kept apart. This was largely due to the influence of the monk, which was till recent times enormous in Orthodox life. There were no monastic Orders, such as grew up in the West. Every monk and nun followed the Basilian rule in general; but each monastery had its own foundation charter outlining its special constitution and duties. Most monasteries were under the authority of the local bishop, but some were directly under the Metropolitan or the Patriarch, while others, especially in or near the great cities, might be under the Emperor himself. The great monastic republic of Mount Athos, with its several houses, owed allegiance to the Emperor but was autonomous. The monasteries performed various functions. In the countryside they looked after their forests and farmlands and were centres for contemplation and places to which the village priest and his flock could come for comfort and advice. In the cities they served as old people's homes to which the elderly of both sexes and all classes would usually retire, to avoid being a burden on their families. They ran hospitals and orphanages and primary schools. They provided monks to act as confessors or as tutors in private families. It was these city monks, loosely attached to a monastery and moving freely amongst the people whom they served, who tended to mould public opinion. In the earlier Byzantine centuries this influence had been largely exercised by holy hermits or by Stylites, to whom people would flock for counsel. But by

the eleventh century such saints were rare, chiefly owing to the part that the Liturgy now played in people's lives. No one, not even a hermit, wished to be deprived of attending the Liturgy; and anyone who wished to contemplate in solitude would find a cage or cell not far from some monastery-church.

Though every monastery was required to house a library and though some were intellectual centres where manuscripts, secular as well as religious, were studied and copied, the monks in general were conservative in their outlook, austere in their standards, deeply suspicious of the luxury and the intellectual brilliance of the Court and the upper hierarchy, and determinedly opposed to any attempt by the Emperor to interfere in matters of religion. They were mainly responsible for maintaining the fight against the Iconoclastic emperors in the eighth and ninth centuries and, in the later middle ages, for encouraging the natural dislike of the Byzantines for any form of union with the Western Church. If an Emperor deposed a Patriarch who criticized his morals or his doctrine, the monks would rally to the support of the fallen hierarch. An Emperor who offended them had to move very warily. On the other hand they interfered very little in the actual administration of the Church; and they disapproved very strongly, as did the Byzantines in general, of ecclesiastics who tried to play a part in secular politics. Such great Patriarchs as Nicholas Mysticus in the tenth century and Michael Cerularius in the eleventh could defeat the Emperor on matters that had a religious significance, such as the marriage laws or reconciliation with Rome; but each quickly fell from power when he tried to control the civil administration. It was not for churchmen to have political pretensions. The historian princess Anna Comnena considered the Pope's claim to political superiority over lay monarchs as being outrageous and ridiculous. She was even more horrified by the Western bishops who fought in the Crusading armies.

In consequence the range of Orthodox Canon Law was limited. Even the marriage laws were not considered to be a matter for the ecclesiastical courts until the tenth century, when they also acquired control over wills and testaments and regulations about the guardianship of orphans. These were held to

be matters that had a religious aspect. The canon lawyers had no wish to intervene in secular cases.

The relations between Church and State in Byzantium were thus undefined and imprecise. They depended upon tradition, sentiment and good sense. Fundamentally Church and State were considered to be integrated, the ecclesiastical organization being an important part of the administration, indeed, the more important half of it. The Patriarch, at its head, ranked next to the Emperor, and to a certain extent could control the Emperor; for he could refuse to perform the coronation ceremony if he disapproved of the Imperial candidate. In the early sixth century the Emperor Anastasius I had to repudiate heretical leanings before the Patriarch would crown him, and in the tenth John Tzimisces had to abandon his liaison with his predecessor's widow. But the Patriarch was not the Emperor's equal. In the *Epanagoge*, the draft law-code that the Patriarch Photius drew up for Basil I and Leo VI, it is implied that the Patriarch is even holier than the Emperor. But the *Epanagoge* remained a draft. No Emperor could accept that clause, nor would public opinion have approved. Later canonists, such as Balsamon and Chomatenus, had no doubt about the superior position of the Emperor. But no one felt the need for a written constitution. An occasional concordat would decide specific issues, such as the Tome of Union in 920 which regulated the question of third and fourth marriages: or the concordat concluded at the close of the fourteenth century, by which the Emperor was at last officially given the right both to nominate bishops and to transfer them from see to see, though that had hitherto been contrary to Canon Law.

By that time, however, it was necessary to review the whole relationship. The Empire had shrunk and was tottering to its fall. The Emperor still enjoyed prestige as head of the Orthodox Oecumene; but his effective rule barely extended beyond the walls of Constantinople: whereas the Patriarch was still the administrative head of a great ecclesiastical province, large areas of which were under infidel Turkish control. In those areas the Byzantine lay officials had been ejected, and the bishop alone was left to administer, as far as was permitted, the affairs of the

Emperor's former subjects. The Emperor therefore liked to have some control over appointments to such bishoprics.

Indeed, the position of the Orthodox Churches in countries that were not under the political control of the Emperor had caused problems for some centuries past. The Balkan kingdoms, Bulgaria and Serbia, had consciously become nations. Their rulers might pay deference to the Emperor as a senior monarch, but they were often at war with him and had no intention of submitting to his practical authority, or of allowing their Churches to be administered from Constantinople. The Byzantines, whose missionaries had founded the Balkan Churches, were accustomed to the idea of autonomous Churches using their own liturgy in their own vernacular; but both Emperor and Patriarch liked to keep as much control over such Churches as political circumstances would permit. They were annoyed when the Bulgarian and Serbian monarchs each in turn raised the head of his Church to the rank of Patriarch. This unilateral elevation meant nothing canonically, as the titles were not endorsed by a Oecumenical Council; and the Patriarch of Preslav or of Ohrid or of Pec was nowhere considered as being on a level with the Patriarchs of the ancient sees. But the title was regarded, at least by its wearers, as signifying ecclesiastical independence. When Byzantium was in control of the Balkans, as in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the title was abolished and, though the autonomy of the Bulgarian and Serbian Churches was allowed and the native liturgy was not interrupted, a Byzantine was usually superimposed as Metropolitan of Bulgaria and of Serbia. At other times the hierarchs, though they might occasionally flirt with the Church of Rome, were anxious to be recognized by the Patriarch of Constantinople and to remain in full communion with him.

The Turkish advance through the Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries altered the position. With the lay monarchies destroyed the local hierarchs could not maintain their pretensions. In order to survive they were obliged to accept the protection of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. They did so resentfully; and, though for many centuries the Greeks of Constantinople dominated the Balkan Churches, each managed

to preserve its separate identity. Each remained a nationalist force, as hostile to its Greek masters as it was to its Turkish overlords.

The Russian Church was in a different position. Russia was too far off from Constantinople for the Emperor to be able to exercise any direct political influence there; and, no doubt for that reason, the Russians were far readier to acknowledge their cultural and religious debt to Constantinople than were the Orthodox in the Balkans. They had been converted at a time when their country was dominated by the Princes of Kiev. But the hegemony of Kiev faded in the course of the eleventh century; and the princes of the various local centres struggled incessantly for the supremacy until the later fourteenth century, when the princes of Moscow established themselves as the Grand Princes. In the meantime Russia had been overrun by the Mongols; and the greater part of the country remained under the suzerainty of the Khans of the Golden Horde until well into the fifteenth century. In all this turmoil the Church organization provided the one unifying force. The Grand Prince of the moment might try to take control of it, but his rivals preferred that it should remain independent, a potential arbiter in their quarrels. For this reason the Russians were for a long time prepared to let the Patriarch of Constantinople nominate the Metropolitan of Russia, though the nomination had to be ratified by the Grand Prince: without whose good will the Metropolitan could not well have operated. It might be galling for the Russians to have a foreigner at the head of their hierarchy; but as a foreigner he could keep himself detached from their quarrels, and he provided a link with the cultural centre of Byzantium. But it was not always easy to maintain the connection. The Fourth Crusade and the Latin capture of Constantinople in 1204 damaged Byzantine power and prestige. The Mongol conquest of Russia followed soon afterwards. Even after the Byzantines recaptured their capital in 1261, and in spite of their prudent policy of alliance with the Mongols, communications between Constantinople and Russia remained infrequent and slow. Already in the twelfth century at least one Russian had been appointed Metropolitan, owing to the delay in obtaining

a nominee from Constantinople. By the middle of the thirteenth century it had been arranged that the Patriarch and the Grand Prince would alternately make the appointment, the other confirming the choice. It was an ingenious solution. The Greek Metropolitan saw to it that the Church kept its impartial position in Russian politics and did not sink into provincialism. His Russian successor could restrain any excessive Byzantine influence and could see to it that the Church remained Russian. Moreover it was only on every other occasion that there was danger of a delay in the appointment.

This practice ended in the middle of the fifteenth century. The hegemony of the Muscovite Prince was by now firmly established, and Moscow was the permanent seat of the Metropolitan. The Byzantine Empire was obviously dying. The Grand Prince 'of All the Russias', as he had begun to call himself, with his subjects far outnumbering the few that were left under the control of Constantinople, saw himself as the real head of the Orthodox world. In about 1395 the Patriarch Antony IV of Constantinople was obliged to write a letter of reproof to the Grand Prince Vassily I, to remind him that the Emperor, despite his material weakness, was still the Holy Emperor and must be treated with deference. In 1439 the Metropolitan Isidore, a Greek from Monemvasia appointed by the Patriarch at the Emperor's request, went in the Emperor's party as a delegate to the Union Council of Florence and there signed the decree of Union with the Roman Church. He had been forbidden by the Grand Prince Vassily II to commit the Russian Church, which was entirely opposed to union; and when he returned to Russia he was received with such hostility by both Prince and people that he hastily made his escape back to Italy. Vassily II then wrote to the Emperor John VIII to announce that Isidore had been deposed and a Russian, Jonah, appointed in his place. 'We have done this', Vassily wrote, 'not from pride or insolence, but from necessity'. In Russian eyes the Church of Constantinople had lapsed into heresy by officially accepting the Union, and a heretic Metropolitan could not be tolerated. The capture of the Imperial City by the Turks a few years later was a just punishment administered by God. Henceforward there

was no question of having a Metropolitan appointed from Constantinople. But, once the Patriarchate had recovered from its lapse, every Russian Metropolitan liked to have his title confirmed by Constantinople. Even though it had fallen into captivity the Great Church of Constantinople, the Oecumenical Patriarchate, still commanded a high prestige.

Thus at the end of the middle ages there were two distinct and different trends in the Orthodox world. In the lands of the old Christian Empire of the East, in Greece, Anatolia and the Balkans, the Orthodox had lost their political freedom and had to adapt themselves to face the future as second-class citizens, in a realm ruled by Muslim potentates. In Russia, with its growing Orthodox population, Christian power was in the ascendant. The Princes of Muscovy were uniting the country. In 1490 they threw off at last their nominal vassalage to the Khans of the Golden Horde. By the end of the century they bore the title of Tsar of All the Russias. The Tsars were henceforward the Orthodox Emperors; and they intended the Church to serve their imperialistic aims.

For neither of these trends had the Byzantine system provided good training. Byzantium had worked out a practical, if uncoded and not always logical, relationship between Caesar's and God's affairs, and had been able to do so because Caesar was God's representative. As Caesar he was an autocrat who was responsible for the whole lay administration, in which the Church hierarchs had no wish to interfere, so long as he respected the laws of God of which they were the guardians. As God's representative his autocracy received divine sanction, which however might be withheld were he proved unworthy of it. It worked because every Byzantine, lay or cleric, prince or peasant, was deeply religious and proudly identified the Orthodox Empire with the Church of God on earth. It worked, too, because Byzantium never forgot its Greco-Roman past. It had a high respect for the Law, even though the Law stemmed from pagan Rome. It had a high respect for the intellect; and the Emperor was surrounded by a well-educated, articulate and often critical bureaucracy which respected his office but not his person, should he fall below the required standard. The

Emperor knew his limitations. His autocracy was not irresponsible. He must do his duty and respect law and tradition; and if he broke the moral laws his subjects would obey him no longer. He represented God before the people, but he also represented the people before God. He was bound not only by the laws of God but also by the laws of the people. Caesar was less than God.

But how was this delicate balance between Caesar and God to survive under Russian Tsars, brought up with Mongol notions of autocracy, ill-educated in the traditions of Greece and ignorant of Roman law, ruling over subjects who were for the most part illiterate, lacking the cultured lay professional classes that had given Byzantium its stability? And how was it to survive when Caesar was an infidel Sultan ruling through infidel ministers, and God's people were second-class citizens? The attempts of the Orthodox to solve these problems according to their tradition explain much of what is happening to them today.

## II

## UNDER THE INFIDEL YOKE

With the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 the Christian Empire of the East came to an end. There was no longer an Orthodox Emperor to represent God on earth. To the last, impotent and impoverished though he had become, he was still a living symbol of the full integration of the religious with the secular which should characterize the government of God's Church on earth. Even the Orthodox who for centuries had lived under the rule of lords of a different faith, whether infidel Muslims or heretic Franks, had continued to regard the Emperor as their true sovereign, the figure that gave unity and meaning to the pattern of their earthly lives. A new pattern had now to be found.

Already for eight centuries there had been Orthodox communities living under Muslim domination. Syria, Palestine, and Egypt had been Christian provinces when they were conquered by Islam. Many of the Christians there no longer belonged to the Orthodox Church. In Egypt the Orthodox were far outnumbered by the Copts, Monophysites who rejected the findings of the Fourth Oecumenical Council, the Council of Chalcedon of 451, which insisted on the dual nature of Christ. In Syria there was another great Monophysite body, usually known as the Jacobite Church, after the sixth-century bishop Jacob Baradaeus who gave it its organization. There was the smaller Church of the Monotheletes, who believed that Christ had two natures but only one will. They are represented today by the Maronites of

the Lebanon, though they have long since modified their characteristic heresy and have accepted the supremacy of Rome. In Eastern Syria and all over the vast Asian continent further to the East were the Nestorians, who had seceded after the Third Oecumenical Council, of Ephesus in 431, holding that Christ's divine and human natures were separate. Their hour of greatness was in the thirteenth century, when they nearly became the official Church of the huge Mongol Empire. Then there were the Armenians, with colonies scattered throughout the Near East, all of them, except for such as sought preferment within Byzantium, belonging to their own separate national Church: which, like the Coptic and Jacobite Churches, rejected the Council of Chalcedon, though in their case the trouble was not so much over the theological issue as over the fact that the Armenian bishops had arrived late for the Council and therefore refused to be bound by its decisions. To all these Christians Islam seemed at first to be just another, if rather extreme, Christian heresy; and many of them, especially among the Monophysites, found it theologically excusable and politically advantageous to become converts to the new dominant faith. But many Christians resisted conversion, especially amongst the Orthodox, who maintained large congregations in Syria and in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem itself, which until the eve of the Crusades was predominantly a Christian city.

The Muslims had their own system for governing religious minorities. It is usually called the *millet* system, from the Persian word meaning 'nation', the Sassanid Persians having been the first to employ it. From early times in the East, since the days of tribal gods who were local and not mutually exclusive, nationality was equated with religion. A man's nationality was identified by his faith. He belonged to the Orthodox *millet*, or the Jacobite *millet*, or the Samaritan *millet*, or whatever *millet* it might be. The Muslims were prepared to tolerate sects belonging to the People of the Book, that is to say, Christians and Jews and, illogically, Zoroastrians, but they were not prepared to give them full citizenship in the Muslim state. Each minority sect was therefore treated as an autonomous unit, allowed to retain its own laws and customs in all matters that concerned its members

alone. In their dealings with the Muslims and in matters concerning security and order the members of the *milet* had to abide by the laws and regulations of the Muslim state. They were obliged to pay special taxes; and various petty restrictions were placed on them. They could not proselytize; they could only build new churches or synagogues under license; they wore distinctive dress so that they could be always recognised. Their menfolk could not marry Muslim women, though their own women were often taken into Muslim harems and permitted to retain their faith there. The administration of the *milet* was allotted to its religious head, whose business it was to see that his flock was law-abiding and content, paying the taxes that were due and refraining from treasonable activities. It was a reasonable system. When the Arabs invaded the Imperial provinces, just as when the northern Barbarians had invaded the Roman West, the lay officials were displaced or fled, and the bishop was left to represent his flock in dealings with the conquerors, taking his orders, when it was possible, from his religious superior. The hierarchy remained unchanged; and it was natural that, with the religious group forming the national unit, the religious head should take charge of it. Thus the Copts were administered by the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, the Jacobites under the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, the Nestorians under their Grand Catholicus, and the Orthodox under the three Orthodox Patriarchs, of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.

There were disadvantages. The minorities had no ultimate sanction against the whims of their infidel overlords; and now and then the Muslims would show their dislike and contempt for the Christians by attacking them and burning their property. But most Muslim rulers found that their Christian subjects were well-behaved citizens whose industry and professional skill enriched the state. Indeed, most of the Abbasid Caliphs' favourite scholars, the men who translated ancient Greek works into Arabic for them, were Christians. But it was unwise for a Christian to become too prosperous. Moreover, the system put a strain on the Christian hierarchy. It had been the tradition of the Eastern Church that its officials should not interfere in

purely lay matters. Now the chief hierarch found himself to be a lay administrator, obliged to organize law-courts and a fiscal service and to give directives on secular politics. He was, to use the Greek term, the *ethnarch*, the ruler of the nation. He had become the local Caesar as well as the deputy of God.

The three Orthodox Patriarchs of the East were, however, in a different position from that of the heretic hierarchs. To them and their flocks the Emperor at Constantinople was still the head of the Orthodox Oecumene to which they belonged. Their ultimate allegiance was to him. So long as this did not involve them in open treason the Caliph was ready to accept this. They belonged to the Orthodox nation; they were *Rumi*, in his language; so naturally their suzerain was the Emperor of Rum, of East Rome. He allowed the Emperor to intervene to see to the welfare of the Orthodox in his dominions, and he would sometimes put diplomatic pressure on the Emperor by threatening to persecute them. Unless the Empire and the Caliphate were actually at war—the perpetual raiding along the frontier did not count as war—the Emperor maintained a representative at each of the Patriarchal Courts, and the Patriarchs one at Constantinople. The Patriarchs were seldom prevented from visiting Constantinople themselves. The break-up of the Caliphate and the decline of the Empire in the later middle ages, together with the complications caused by the Crusades, did not cancel this system, though it became less effective and liable to interruption. But the final extinction of the Empire changed the whole situation, for the Orthodox of the Eastern Patriarchates as well as those of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Sultan Mehmet II, the Ottoman conqueror of Constantinople, had therefore to devise a fresh constitution for his Christian subjects. He naturally made use of the *milet* system, to which the Muslim world was accustomed. Thanks to his friendship with the learned Greek divine, George Scholarius Gennadius, whom he appointed, acting as Emperor, to the Patriarchate, the terms which the Orthodox received were not unfavourable, at least on paper; but unfortunately the relevant documents soon disappeared, probably owing to a fire at the Patriarchate. The Orthodox became, as was inevitable, second-class citizens, for-

bidden to bear arms or to ride on horseback, except for the Patriarch himself, and obliged to wear a distinctive dress. In their dealings with the Muslims they had to accept the restrictions customary for a Christian *milet*, and to pay the special taxes imposed on the minorities, in theory because they were not required (or allowed) to serve in the armed forces. But within the traditional limits they were to enjoy complete self-government, obeying their own laws and customs. Their freedom of worship was guaranteed, together with their possession of the churches and monasteries that were left to them on the morrow of the conquest. They could run their own schools—the Patriarchal Academy, founded in the sixth century, still exists today, without a break in its history; it is the oldest surviving school in the world. The clergy were to be free from the duty of paying taxes. Bishops could not be deposed by the lay authorities without the consent of the Holy Synod, composed of the Patriarch and his high officials and metropolitans sitting in council. The Patriarch was to enjoy security of tenure and could only be deposed by a unanimous vote of the other members of the Holy Synod. He was to enjoy special privileges, practical as well as ceremonial; and he and his Court were to be consulted on all matters that concerned the *milet*.

Moreover, as the *milet* was based on religion and not on race or nationality in the modern sense, it embraced all the Orthodox within the Sultan's dominions, whether Greek or Serb, Bulgar or Vlach. All came under the rule of the Patriarch. When later the Ottoman Sultan conquered Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, while canonically the congregations remained under their respective Patriarchs, the Turks who did not understand such niceties regarded them all as being under the Patriarch of Constantinople: whose brothers of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were in any case obliged to defer to him; for he lived at the seat of power and could obtain the ear of the Sultan or the Grand Vizier, while they could only deal with local governors. It was the Patriarch of Constantinople who on their election submitted their names to the Sultan for confirmation, and who therefore could control their appointment.

The Patriarch of Constantinople thus emerged from the

change of régime with far greater powers than before. He was the ruler of the Orthodox world of the Near East, a world which the Turkish conquests reunited. Only Russia lay outside of his Empire; and the Russian Church regarded him with deference. For the next three centuries the Orthodox of the Near East were more closely unified than they had been since early Byzantine times. This unity guaranteed that Orthodoxy would endure and could resist the attacks made on it by missionaries from the Roman Church and, later, the Protestant Churches; and, incidentally, because the senior Orthodox authorities were Greeks, it meant that Hellenism would endure. But the system had its disadvantages. First, it involved the Church organization in administration and politics, for which the churchmen were not equipped. The Patriarch was obliged to call in laymen to act as lawyers and financiers; and in time the laymen began to interfere in the affairs of the Church itself and to use it to promote their own individual interests and the interests of their class. Secondly, the Patriarch's power had no ultimate sanction. He was the ruler of the Orthodox but he was the slave of the infidel Sultan. Too much of his time had to be spent in placating his master, at the expense of the welfare of the Church.

The well-being of the Orthodox depended upon the readiness of subsequent Sultans and their ministers to honour the agreement made between Mehmet II and the Patriarch Gennadius. Mehmet, though he put many eminent Greek laymen to death, was on the whole well disposed towards his Greek subjects. He liked to think of himself as being the heir of the Emperors as well as of the Sultans. He had been brought up at a time when there were still distinguished Greek scholars in Constantinople and a dignified, if impoverished, Court there. He was impressed by Greek culture and interested in it, and he liked Gennadius. But when his son Bayezid II succeeded him the Greeks had become a poor community. The Imperial Court was gone. Their scholars were dead or had fled abroad. There was no figure of the calibre of Gennadius left among them. Bayezid and his successors were unimpressed by the Greeks and as good Muslims saw no reason for giving them special protection. Christian rights began to be whittled down. In Constantinople

and in other cities their churches were taken from them one by one and converted into mosques. At first the Christians protested, with some success; but by the eighteenth century only three small churches dating from before the Conquest were left in Christian hands. It was not easy to obtain permission to build new churches. Christian schools were discouraged, especially in the provinces, where local governors would arbitrarily arrest teachers or pupils. A Christian involved in litigation against a Turk seldom obtained justice. Any who became rich was liable to have his goods confiscated and would be lucky not to put to death on a trumped-up charge of treason. Most demoralizing of all was the permanent need to bribe the Ottoman authorities. No permit to build a church or a school would be granted without a gift of money to the appropriate officials. The clergy might be legally free from the obligation to pay taxes, but they would be liable to accusations of treason or some other crime if they did not make 'voluntary' contributions to the government. No high ecclesiastical post would be confirmed by the Sultan or his governors without a large and increasing sum of money changing hands.

For this the Greeks themselves were partly to blame. Already in Mehmet II's reign an ambitious archbishop offered the Sultan's ministers 2000 pieces of gold if they would order the Holy Synod to depose the actual Patriarch and appoint him in his place. His scheme was thwarted by the Sultan's Christian stepmother, a Serbian princess; but she found it advisable to offer the Sultan a similar sum. The harm was done. Henceforward every Patriarch-elect was expected to pay a sum to the Sultan before his election was confirmed; and this sum, known as the *peshkesh*, steadily grew in size. Naturally, therefore, it suited the Sultan to have as many changes on the Patriarchal throne as possible. Of all the Sultans only the great Suleiman the Magnificent, who was consistently just towards his Christian subjects, discouraged such frequent depositions. The situation was at its worst in the seventeenth century. Between the years 1595 and 1695 there were sixty-one changes in the Patriarchate, though, as many Patriarchs were reinstated a few years, or even months, after they had been deposed, there were only thirty-one

individual Patriarchs. Some reigns lasted only for a few weeks, and very few for more than three years. One Patriarch, the eminent but controversial divine Cyril Lucaris, enjoyed seven distinct spells on the throne. In 1726 the Patriarch Calixtus III paid roughly 5,600 gold pounds for his election and was so excited by his success that he died next day from a sudden heart attack. However, by that date the Greek community was beginning to persuade the Sultan to permit greater stability. During the eighteenth century Patriarchs enjoyed slightly more secure tenure. From 1695 to 1795 there were only thirty-one Patriarchal reigns.

In addition to the *peshkesh* the Patriarchate was expected from the early sixteenth century onward to pay a large annual subsidy to the Sultan, which remained fairly constant at about 3,000 gold pounds. Various minor obligations were at times arbitrarily placed upon the Patriarch. For instance, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries he was required to supply a daily ration of mutton for the Palace Guard, which was composed of hungry men.

Bishops similarly had to bribe the local governor to have their appointments confirmed, and had to pay him regular subsidies. Turkish officials could raise further sums by threatening to confiscate church property or to close down monasteries or schools. Occasionally a Sultan such as Suleiman the Magnificent or a Grand Vizier such as Mehmet Köprülü or his son Ahmet would intervene to protect the Christians; but usually they had no redress. As a result the debts of the Church rose steeply. Its revenues barely sufficed to cover its running costs; and the money demanded by the Turks had to be raised from other sources, mainly by special taxes imposed upon the faithful. On the eve of the Greek War of Independence it was estimated that the Patriarchate of Constantinople owed over a million and a half piastres.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the Christians tried to improve their situation by seeking the protection of foreign powers. This was satisfactory if the power whose protection was sought was on good terms with the Turkish government or in a position to put pressure on it. But



a shift in Turkish foreign policy could easily involve a charge of treason. Moreover, if the Greeks sought the help of France or the Hapsburg Empire, those powers, admirably served in the East by Jesuit missionaries, would insist on closer relations with the Church of Rome: while in contrast England or Holland would demand a stronger opposition to Popery and would press for a reform of the Church along good Protestant lines. By the end of the seventeenth century the Western powers had decided that the Christians in Turkey were too feeble to be worthy of attention: while the Orthodox preferred to seek the protection of a power that was itself Orthodox, Imperial Russia. But, though the Turks were nervous of Russia and unwilling to provoke her by persecuting her protégés, and though the Russian Tsar claimed over the Orthodox the same suzerainty that the Byzantine Emperor had held over the Orthodox in the medieval Caliphate, there was often war between Russia and Turkey; and a Greek known to support the Russians would find himself guilty of treason.

In this atmosphere of corruption and intrigue, into which the Christians were forced by the corruption around them and by their own ultimate impotence, oppressed by spasmodic and haphazard but often fierce persecution, the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire might easily have foundered. 'It is . . . a Miracle', wrote the seventeenth-century English traveller, Sir Paul Ricaut, 'that there is conserved still amongst so much Opposition, and in despite of all Tyranny and Arts contrived against it, an open and public Profession of the Christian Faith.' There were, however, factors that ensured its survival. Its very feebleness was an asset. The Turks never took it seriously as a potential danger. To a good Muslim brought up on the teachings of the Prophet, Christianity, though an inferior religion, was a lawful one. Though fanatics might rouse the Muslim rabble against Christians now and then, especially if they could be made the scapegoats of some disaster, in general the Ottoman authorities had no objection to the practice of Christianity, so long as the Christians remembered their inferior status. Unlike the Communists of our own times, the Turks respected religion and were impressed by genuine piety, even in members of another

faith. Their usual attitude towards the Christians was an almost affectionate contempt, such as a good-humoured bully feels towards his victims.

The Orthodox derived a more positive source of strength from their sense of nationality. To the Ottoman Turks nationality was still a matter of religion; all the Orthodox belonged to the one Orthodox *milet*.<sup>\*</sup> But the component parts of the *milet* were conscious of nationality in its modern form. To the Greeks the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople was the Greek Patriarchate, the guardian of Hellenism and the Greek tradition. The Bulgars and Serbs each had their own Church, to which they clung as a national symbol; and the Vlachs of the Principalities north of the Danube were developing their national Church. These Churches were, it is true, dominated by Greeks because Greeks had control of the *milet*, and they disliked their Greek masters. The mutual dislike weakened Orthodoxy politically and prevented the Orthodox from acting in unison when the time came for nationalist risings. But the fact that each Church was a truly nationalist Church ensured that it would endure. On the other hand this nationalism which gave vitality to the Church was to cause embarrassment to the Patriarch of Constantinople in his relations with his earthly suzerain, the Sultan.

That embarrassment only became a live problem towards the end of the eighteenth century. In the meantime the Greeks sought to strengthen themselves in a way that was not openly treasonable. North of the Danube lay two large Vlach principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia, which today, together with Transylvania, make up the country called Rumania. Each in turn had surrendered to the Turks after a brave resistance; but they had not been conquered by the sword; so Muslim custom allowed them to retain their autonomy and their princes under sovereignty of the Sultan. The Rumanians are not Slavs and

<sup>\*</sup>The Serbian Patriarchate was revived in 1557 through the influence of the Vizier Mehmet Sokullu, a renegade Bosnian with Christian relatives. But the Patriarch of Pec, like the Eastern Patriarchs, had in practice to be subservient to the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Greeks ultimately succeeded in abolishing the Patriarchate in 1755.

have never liked the Slavs, even though they acquired their faith from Slav rather than from Greek missionaries and employed the Slav liturgy until the eighteenth century. They were prepared therefore to welcome Greeks. To the Greeks of Constantinople the Principalities offered a wonderful opportunity. The Turks took little interest in trade and banking, leaving such activities to the Greeks, the Armenians and the Jews, many of whom thus became immensely rich. But a rich Christian in Turkey ran the risk of losing his property and often his life as well. But if he could invest his fortune in the self-governing Principalities that at least would survive intact for his heirs. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards Greek merchants and bankers began to buy up land in the Principalities and to intermarry with the local nobility, above all with the great family of Bassaraba which for generations provided the Princes for both Wallachia and Moldavia. The local families welcomed them, both for their money and for their connections with Constantinople. When the Bassaraba dynasty died out in the mid-seventeenth century, its Greek or Graecized descendants and connections took over the two thrones. This meant at first election by the local boyars, who were susceptible to a little judicious bribery; and the election was confirmed by the Sultan: which involved a larger bribe. After 1731 the Sultan appointed the Princes himself, without the farce of an election. As with the Patriarchal appointments this involved a *peshkesh* and a rather larger one;\* and, as with the Patriarchate, the Sultan liked to enrich himself by ordering frequent changes on the thrones. A Prince of Wallachia or of Moldavia could expect an even shorter tenure of office than could the Patriarch, though, like the Patriarch, he could be reappointed later or be transferred to the other Principality. For instance, Constantine Mavrocordato in the period from 1731 to 1769 enjoyed six separate reigns in Wallachia and four in Moldavia, the longest of them lasting for three years. In consequence, though the

\*By 1750 the throne of Wallachia cost the successful candidate roughly 45,000 gold pounds, and throne of Moldavia 30,000. Transference from one throne to the other cost about 20,000 gold pounds, but usually less if the transfer was from Wallachia to the poorer throne of Moldavia.

Principalities were rich agricultural countries producing large revenues, the revenues never sufficed to pay for the gifts and bribes and tribute demanded by the Sultan and his ministers, as well as the expense of the administration and the Court. One by one the great Greek families found themselves impoverished by their princely ambitions, and made way for others. Yet it was worth while for the Greeks to continue to occupy the two thrones, for it was there, in the comparative security of the Principalities, that they could found schools and universities, libraries and printing-presses, without risking their suppression by the Turks. They saw that it was in these non-Greek lands that Hellenism could be revived. In the long run Rumania benefited from the cultural policy of her Greek princes. At a time when higher education was unknown in the other Balkan countries Rumania possessed academies of some distinction. It is true that the language used in them was Greek, not Rumanian; but they set a standard which has left the Rumanians to this day the most sophisticated of the Balkan races. The Rumanians like to think that their land is so named because they are Romans, the descendants of Trajan's legions; and indeed they speak a language which is basically Romance. But Rumania was first so called because it was the one Orthodox survival of the old Byzantine world, the world which the Muslims called *Rum*. It was the country where the Greeks plotted for the rebirth of Byzantium. When the time came for the War of Greek Independence it was not in Greece but on the plains of Moldavia that the standard of revolt was first raised. The revolt failed there. It was only in the Greek peninsula that it succeeded.

It failed because the Greeks had been too arrogant towards the other Orthodox peoples. They had deliberately run the *milet* as a Greek *milet*; yet they hopefully believed that all the Orthodox, whatever their race, would rally to them when they rose to refound a Byzantium which was clearly intended to be a Greek nationalist Empire. Greek rule had not been wholly bad for the Rumanians. The taxation had been ruinously oppressive; but, quite apart from their cultural policy, the Greek princes had built roads and canals. They had improved the status of the peasants; they had served Rumanian nationalism by introducing

the liturgy in Rumanian. But they had been foreigners. When young Prince Alexander Ypsilanti, whose father had been one of the most popular princes to rule in Moldavia, summoned the Rumanians to join him in 1821, they went their own way. And, as anyone might have foreseen, the Serbs and the Bulgarians would have nothing to do with the Greek revolt.

The Greeks should not be wholly blamed for their arrogance. They followed faithfully the old tradition of the Orthodox which allowed native churches to employ native liturgies, and they never interfered with the lesser clergy. In Bulgaria, Serbia and Rumania the village priests, the abbots and even the bishops of the lesser sees were native; but the problem was to find men of education to fill the top posts in the hierarchy. In Rumania owing to the schools founded by the Princes such men could be found, but their education was Greek. In Serbia and Bulgaria, where the upper classes had been eliminated by the Turks and a middle class was only beginning to emerge in the late eighteenth century, there were few schools and the standard of education was low. The Patriarch could be excused if he imposed on the native churches hierarchs chosen because they were men of education. Unfortunately these men were almost all educated at Constantinople and were Greek, if not by race at least by training. They were apt to treat the native clerics and congregations with contempt. The tithes and offerings that they collected were seldom used for the local churches but were sent off to help pay the debts of the Patriarchate. It was not surprising that the local clergy led the opposition not only against infidel Turkish oppression but also against Greek hierarchical oppression. The Churches in Bulgaria and Serbia, and to a lesser extent in Rumania, became narrowly nationalist Churches, uninterested in the Orthodox Oecumene as a whole.

The Patriarchate had to face a similar problem in Greece itself. It was the Greeks of Constantinople who ran the Patriarchal organization, in particular the wealthy Greek families who lived in the Phanar quarter of the city, close to the Patriarchal buildings, and who are usually known as the Phanariots. Their ancestors had come from all parts of the old Byzantine world, but they themselves seldom left the great capital, except

for brief excursions northward to occupy the Wallachian or Moldavian throne. The Patriarch needed laymen to advise and help him in his administrative duties, and he needed the financial subsidies that these rich Phanariots could provide. They were useful to him too because many of them were in the Sultan's employ and had influence with the Turkish authorities. It was inevitable that they should come largely to control the ecclesiastical administration. But for the most part they were completely out of touch with the Greeks of the provinces. The Greeks in Asia Minor were either merchants in the cities or peasants living in small enclaves. They were too busy struggling to survive against oppression to take much interest in politics. In the Greek peninsula, however, the Turkish veneer was thin, and there was a growing nationalist feeling. It was a poor country. Two or three of the Aegean islands were fairly prosperous, owing to their merchant-shipping or their pirates; and a few towns, especially in the north, had flourishing local industries, such as Castoria with its furriers. But for the most part it was peopled by peasants barely scraping a living. The standard of education was low. Attempts to found good schools had been made, especially at Athens, but had been soon thwarted by Turkish hostility. A bright boy could slip across to the Ionian Islands, still in Venetian hands; or he made his way to Constantinople and never returned. Their faith was the weapon of these country Greeks against oppression; and their faith was dictated by the monasteries of the countryside to which the village-priest, himself a peasant, went for spiritual advice. The monks, like the extreme monkish party in old Byzantium, were suspicious of the glitter and pretensions of the rich Greeks of Constantinople and of the hierarchy there which neglected them except when it wished to extort money from them.

Their grievances were understandable. The Phanariots tried to mould the Patriarchate according to their own ideas. Some of these ideas were excellent. They believed in modernizing education; they wished to appear as enlightened as anyone in Western Europe. But modern education in the eighteenth century meant an admiration of the French *philosophes*, who preached rationalism and dreaded anything that might be labelled as

superstition. The more sophisticated members of the Patriarchal Court were prepared, a little grudgingly, to co-operate with such modernism; but it was hardly suitable for export to the simple provinces. When in 1753 the Patriarch Cyril V founded an academy on Mount Athos and sent the eminent Greek philosopher Eugenios Voulgaris to lecture to the monks on German metaphysics, there was such disapproval on the Mountain that Voulgaris soon left and the academy was closed. If this was education, the monks would have none of it. Visitors to the Greek provinces in the later eighteenth century were appalled by the ignorance of the Greek clergy. This ignorance was largely the result of a reaction against the sophistication of the Patriarchal Court.

The split between the upper hierarchy and the body of the Church in Greece was widened by another issue, which directly concerned the relations of the Christians with the infidel State. As the Turkish administration declined in efficiency the Greeks of Greece grew more and more restive. In the islands the number of pirates increased. In the mainland many young men took to the mountains. These *klephts*, as they were called, lived by banditry, directed mainly against Turkish landowners and officials, though they were ready also to rob Christian merchants or travellers of any race. To the Greek villagers they were the local heroes; and they could usually find refuge from the Turkish police in the monasteries. At the same time, to the embarrassment of the Patriarchate, Russian propaganda was inciting the Greeks of the Peloponnese and the islands to rise against the Sultan. When in 1770 a Russian fleet appeared in the Mediterranean, the Peloponnesian Greeks eagerly rose in revolt, only to be savagely crushed. Yet many Greeks continued to believe that Russia would somehow deliver them. More enterprising were the Greeks from the provinces who went to Western Europe for their education. There they found ideas of freedom burgeoning in the wake of the American Revolution; and they found, too, that while the West had little use for medieval and modern Greece it greatly admired the Classical Greeks. Led by the Smyrniot Adamantios Korais, they sought to inspire the Greeks with pride in their Classical past. Korais

and his friends had little use for their native Church, which they regarded as superstitious. Some of them were freethinkers, some Freemasons. They despised the Patriarchate and the pretentious Phanariot intellectuals of the Patriarchal Court, who claimed to be modern while clinging to their medieval traditions and to their Turkish titles. Yet it was to Korais rather than to the Patriarch that the simple pious Greeks of Greece now looked for guidance; for he gave them self-respect; he told them of their glorious past and held out hopes of a glorious future.

How was the Patriarch to react to call for liberty? The Patriarchal Court and its lay advisers longed like all Greeks to be free, but they were in less of a hurry. To them it seemed clear that the Ottoman Empire was crumbling. If they waited in patience, in the meantime infiltrating as far as possible into the administration, it would collapse of its own accord; and then, perhaps with judicious help from Russia, they would be able to take over the whole Empire, and so revive Byzantium. Their hopes were optimistic. They took seriously such pleasant schemes as that of Catherine II of Russia to set up a Christian Empire at Constantinople under a grandson whom she had hopefully christened Constantine. To the Patriarchate this policy was attractive because it did not involve him in open defiance of the State. The tradition that the Church should render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's was firmly rooted amongst the Orthodox. The injunction had been given when Caesar was a pagan; it must therefore apply when Caesar was a Muslim. Moreover, every Patriarch on his accession swore allegiance to the Sultan and guaranteed that his flock would not engage in treasonable activity. Was it, indeed, practical to encourage revolt? The Turkish administration might be crumbling, but the Turkish army was still active and formidable. Every attempt that the Greeks had made to revolt, even with foreign aid, as in 1770, had been mercilessly repressed, and fierce reprisals had followed. It was true that the Serbs rose in 1805, and the Turks were unable to crush them; but twelve years of cruel and destructive fighting passed before the Serbs were granted autonomy for a small portion of their country. Was the Patriarch not only to break his solemn oath to the Sultan but also to encourage his

flock to follow a course that would certainly entail bitter suffering? Yet the Patriarch was a Greek and a Christian. Could he forbid his fellow-Greeks and fellow-Christians to fight for their freedom?

It was a difficult problem, and one on which the whole future of the Orthodox Churches depended. The Patriarchate can hardly be blamed for trying to avoid giving a clear answer. For a Patriarch openly to support rebellion would have resulted in his own arrest and execution and would have risked the abolition of the Patriarchate: whereas if he could keep his people quiet he would retain the good will of the Sultan and might be able to procure benefits for the Church. The old tradition enjoined him to keep clear of sedition. But the old tradition dated before the days of modern nationalism. Whether he supported or repudiated rebellion he would run into trouble.

At first the Patriarchate adopted a policy of caution. In 1790 there appeared a pamphlet attributed on the title page to a dying Patriarch of Jerusalem, who however unexpectedly recovered and vehemently denied the authorship, and perhaps written by the Patriarch Gregory V of Constantinople, then entering on his first term of office. It was entitled *A Paternal Exhortation*, and it exhorted the Orthodox to remember that God had placed them under the Sultan for their own good, and that political freedom was 'an enticement of the Devil and a murderous poison destined to push the people into disorder and destruction'. Few Greeks, even in Constantinople, were pleased by such advice. A little later the Patriarchate offended the provincial Greeks by obeying a command by the Sultan to excommunicate any priest or monk who gave shelter to the bandit Klephts. When the movement for independence grew stronger the Patriarchate tried to keep in touch with it without being involved. Its caution was in vain. When Alexander Ypsilanti raised the standard of revolt in Moldavia in February, 1821, the Patriarchate was taken by surprise; and soon the news came that the Greeks of Greece had followed suit, on 21 March, under a local hierarch, Germanus, Archbishop of Patras. Had the Patriarch Gregory V, recently restored to the throne, been able to bring himself publicly to disown the revolt he might have

saved his life. But his Greek patriotism was too strong for that. And so the Turkish police moved in; and soon Gregory and his chief advisers, clerical and lay, were to be seen hanging at the gate of the Patriarchate.

It was the end of the old *millet* system. Nationalism was seen to have a new face. The Turks did not abolish the Patriarchate, but it was shorn of much of its legal and financial powers. The area of its jurisdiction was reduced; for the small Kingdom of Greece that emerged out of the War of Independence insisted on an autonomous Church at whose head was the Metropolitan of Athens. The Serbian Church was granted autonomy in 1831. The Rumanians had to wait a little longer. They declared their Church to be autonomous in 1859; but it was not until 1885 that the Patriarch recognized its autonomy. The Bulgarian Church declared its independence in 1870, with the approval of the Sultan, Bulgaria being still a Turkish province. This action was particularly resented by the Patriarchate, which excommunicated the whole Bulgarian Church. It is only since the last war that there has been a reconciliation, and the autonomy recognized.

The long story of the Orthodox Church under infidel rule may seem remote; but it is of relevance today because it shows how the Church was able to survive through centuries of domination by unsympathetic masters. It was a struggle, and it suffered in it. There was little time for theological enterprise, though it produced a few good theologians and some holy mystics. It had neither the money nor the freedom to keep up a high standard of education. Its hierarchy made its mistakes, in alienating its non-Greek congregations and eventually in losing touch with its humbler adherents. But it survived. It learnt to endure passively and with little protest the humiliations imposed on it. There were indeed martyrs during these centuries; but the Church did not court martyrdom; it could not afford to be martyred. The Orthodox were able to survive because they were willing to pay Caesar, infidel though he now was, the tribute that he demanded. Bowing down to him was a temporal affair; it did not impair the integrity of their faith. Temporal miseries were in the end irrelevant. It was because they clung to their

belief in the everlasting values of their faith that they kept the Church alive throughout the long dark Ottoman night. They would not allow the grim dome of life to stain the white radiance of eternity.

But when the dawn came it was not so rosy. They had lived too long in the dark to be well fitted to face the glare of the modern world.

Nor, as it turned out, were their brothers in Russia much better fitted to face it. But theirs was a different story.

### III

## HOLY RUSSIA

While the Orthodox of the old Byzantine world struggled to maintain the faith under infidel rule, their brothers in Russia obeyed an Orthodox prince whose power and pride were steadily increasing. The Russians always felt a deep respect for Constantinople, from where their Christianity had come; but even before the capture of the city by the Turks they had begun to think of themselves as being more truly Orthodox than the Greeks. They had been more indignant than even the Greeks themselves when the Crusaders sacked Constantinople in 1204. They were distressed when the Turks took the city in 1453; but on that occasion their sorrow was tempered by a moral reflection. Constantinople had abandoned the true faith; she had planned a union with the Roman Church; she deserved her fate. The phobic dislike of the West that characterizes Russian history was already strong. It was the Catholic—and, later, Protestant—powers on her Western frontiers that Russia regarded as her hereditary enemies.

The Russian ruler, the Grand Prince of Moscow, could not wholly regret the fall of Constantinople. He had long been conscious that he was the most powerful Orthodox monarch in the world. The Orthodox King of Georgia was far away. The Princes of Wallachia and Moldavia could not compare with him and were soon themselves to admit Turkish suzerainty. But the enfeebled Emperor in Byzantium had still to the last retained a mystical prestige with which he could not compete. But with the

Empire vanished the Grand Prince could claim to be the sovereign of the Orthodox, the heir to the holy Emperors. In 1470 Ivan III, who had succeeded to the throne in 1462, declared the Russian Church to be entirely independent of the captive Church of Constantinople, though the Metropolitan of Moscow and All the Russias continued to seek the Patriarch's approval of his appointment. In 1472 Ivan married the niece of the last Christian Emperor. Sophia Palaeologina had been brought up in exile in Rome; and the Pope arranged the match in the hope that she would work for the conversion of the Russians. But once she was settled in Russia she became staunchly Orthodox.\* From 1473 onwards Ivan began to use the title of Tsar, the title which Slavonic chroniclers had given to the Emperor. The nominal allegiance to the Tartars of the Golden Horde was formally denounced in 1490. In 1498 Ivan held a solemn coronation ceremony in which he associated his grandson, Dmitri, on the throne with him. He called himself 'Tsar Ivan, Grand Prince and Autocrat of All the Russias' on this occasion; and his grandson was charged by the Metropolitan Simon, along with the Tsar, to 'care for all souls and all Orthodox Christendom'. In 1501, in a letter to the Russian clergy, the Metropolitan Simon refers to Ivan III as 'Tsar' and requests the prayers of the faithful for him and for the 'peace and salvation of all Orthodox Christendom'. The Tsar was to be regarded as the earthly head of the Orthodox.

Already in 1451 the Metropolitan Jonah had foreseen the fall of Constantinople, the 'Second Rome'. Was there to be a Third Rome? Could it be other than Moscow, now the one independent, unsullied capital of true Orthodoxy? In 1511 a monk of Pskov, called Philotheus, preached a sermon before Tsar Vassily III, in which the doctrine is fully aired. 'It is', he said, 'through the supreme, all-powerful and all-supporting right hand of God that Emperors reign . . . and it has raised thee, most

\*Later Tsars, such as Ivan IV, who was descended from Sophia, nevertheless claimed their genealogical connection with Byzantium through the marriage of St Vladimir, the first Christian prince, with the Porphyrogenete Anna, sister of Basil II, in 989, though that marriage was in fact childless.

Serene and Supreme Sovereign and Grand Prince, Orthodox Christian Tsar and Lord of All, who art the possessor of the dominions of the holy thrones of God, of the sacred, universal and apostolic Churches of the Holy Mother of God . . . in the place of Rome and Constantinople. . . . Now there shines through the universe, like the sun in heaven, the Third Rome, which is in the Orthodox faith. . . . See to it, most pious Tsar, that all Christian dominions unite with thine own. For two Romes have failed, but the third stands, and there will not be a fourth; for thy Christian Tsardom will not pass to any other, according to the mighty word of God.'

The rest of the sermon was not perhaps so agreeable to the Tsar's ear. Philotheus went on to tell him to obey Christian principles, of which the Church was the guardian, and to respect the rights, privileges and authority of the hierarchy. He saw the Church organization as the dominant power in the Third Rome. The Tsar, on the other hand, envisaged the hierarchy as his servants, operating under his authority. Both views were perversions of the Byzantine theory. In Byzantium, though a few ambitious ecclesiastics had attempted, disastrously, to interfere in secular affairs of state, it was generally accepted that the ultimate authority was the Emperor's, and that the hierarchy should only concern itself with the affairs, which were plentiful enough, which had to do with religion. The Emperor for his part admitted the right of the Church to speak on moral issues; and he never forgot that though he represented God before the people he also represented the people before God. As a pious man he knew that all power comes from God; but when he studied history he could hear the voice of God in the voice of the people. He could ponder on the fate of Emperors such as Phocas or Andronicus I whose atrocities offended the people and who were dragged to death from their thrones. The Tsar was unaware of any such limitation. In Russia there was no well-educated laity, to act as a check both on the Autocrat and on the hierarchy. Except in the cities near the Baltic, whose power was soon to be crushed, there was no active bourgeoisie. The merchants of Moscow were simple folk, almost as crude and illiterate as were the landowners. There was no articulate

proletariat such as would rise and riot in the cities by the Mediterranean. The peasants were serfs, only removed from chattel-slavery in that they were tied to the estate and not to the land-owner's person. The Church represented the only challenge to the Tsar's authority. His political model was not so much the Emperor at Byzantium as his nearer neighbour, the Khan of the Golden Horde, to whom his forebears had been tributary for two centuries. Russia, however, was Holy Russia, the Third Rome, the kingdom spoken of by the Prophet Daniel, 'which shall never be destroyed', the place of refuge for the woman clothed with the sun in the Book of Revelations. The importance of the Church could not be denied. Tsar and Church must work in harmony; but the Tsar was determined to be the master.

Two centuries passed before the Tsar was completely victorious. During the sixteenth century there were two parties in the Russian Church, which are usually called the Possessors and the Non-Possessors. The former, sometimes called the Josephians after their first great leader, Joseph, Abbot of Volokolamsk, held that the Church should be the chief organ in a theocratic state. It should therefore be efficient, well-organized and wealthy, in close contact with the secular government. The Non-Possessors were the heirs of the religious 'Zealots' of Byzantium, that constant opposition within the Byzantine Church which sought to separate the Church as far as possible from the State. The business of the Church was to minister to men's souls, not to buttress Imperial authority. Possessions and organization should be reduced to a minimum. The first great leader of the Non-Possessors, Nil, Abbot of Sor, was particularly angry when the State took it upon itself to punish heresy. Heresy, he believed, was a matter for the Church alone and should be corrected by persuasion and education, not by persecution. Tsar Ivan III, who respected Nil, seems for a time to have calculated that a poor and unpolitical Church might be of advantage to the autocracy; but Joseph and his party had much more to offer to monarchs who wanted the support of ceremony and ritual in establishing themselves as the heirs of the Christian Emperors. Nil died in 1508. Ten years later the Non-Possessors acquired a still more remarkable leader in Maximus the Hagiorite, a Greek

from Epirus who in his youth had travelled in France and Italy, and had been a friend of Savonarola and for a time a Dominican friar, and who had then retired to Mount Athos, where he reorganized the monastic libraries. He was sent to Russia by the Patriarch at Vassily III's request to build up a library in Moscow. He was a distinguished theologian, a mystic, and at the same time a humanist man of letters. But while he was ready to pay honour to a god-fearing monarch he was utterly opposed to state interference in religious affairs. The Tsar, he held, had no business to concern himself with the sacerdotium, which was of a higher order than any earthly kingdom. His views won him twenty years of imprisonment. Vassily III and his son, Ivan IV, the Terrible, preferred the policy of the Metropolitan Macarius, who reorganized the whole monastic system, closing the smaller monasteries, where Non-Possessors were plentiful, or amalgamating them with larger houses, which were placed under the tight control of the hierarchy; and he himself brought the hierarchy into close co-operation with the Tsar. The Non-Possessors were defeated. But their tradition represented Russian religious feeling more truly than that of the Possessors, and it lasted on. We find it, in a slightly different form, a century later, with the Old Believers; and it was carried on throughout Russian history by the hermits and the *staretsi*, the wandering monks who belonged to no monastery and despised worldly goods, some of them saints and some charlatans, and many of them men who acquired enormous influence—and none more than the last and most famous of them, Grigor Rasputin.

The victory of the Possessors had two unfortunate results. It played into the hands of Tsarist autocratic ambitions. Unless the Metropolitan were a man whom the Tsar respected, he and the whole Church organization would become the Tsar's tools; and the Tsar chose his Metropolitan. An autocrat such as Ivan the Terrible had no use for clerics who tried to stand up to him, as the Metropolitan Philip found when in 1569 he ventured to reprove Ivan for his cruelty and his immorality, and was put savagely to death. Secondly, the Possessors encouraged the nationalistic isolation of Russia. It had been the Non-Possessors who, like Maximus the Greek, had been in touch with religious



thought in other lands. The Tsar and his servants would have none of that. In 1551 Ivan the Terrible summoned a Synod of the Russian Church which confirmed as being correctly Orthodox all the special ritual usages that had grown up in Russia, many of which did not conform with Orthodox usage elsewhere. The Synodal Decrees, known as the *Stoglav*, the Hundred Chapters, were greatly resented by the other Orthodox Churches, and by many Russians. If Russia were truly the Third Rome, her attitude should have been more oecumenical. The *Stoglav* represented a deliberate gesture by the Russian Church to proclaim its complete independence of the old Orthodox Patriarchates.

Russian isolationism was, however, curbed by the desire of the Tsar and his clergy alike to have the Metropolitan of Moscow raised to Patriarchal rank. They knew that such an elevation would not be recognized anywhere outside of Russia were it done unilaterally. The approval of Constantinople and of the other historic Patriarchal sees must be obtained. On their side the Patriarchs desired political and financial support from the Tsar. In 1561 Joasaph of Constantinople sent a Synodal letter to Russia in which he recognized the Tsar's Imperial title and suggested that his legate would be prepared to perform a coronation-ceremony as his deputy. The hint was not taken. When Ivan IV's son Feodor was crowned in 1584 the coronation ceremony was performed by the Metropolitan Dionysius of Moscow. The ceremony roughly followed the Byzantine ritual and many of the actual words and acclamations used at Byzantine coronations, but with one significant difference. It was made clear that the Tsar held his throne by inheritance, not by any form of election. The ceremony merely gave ritual confirmation to the choice that God had already made. Three years later Feodor, after tactfully stating that the *Stoglav* had not been intended to imply that Russia was more Orthodox than other Orthodox lands, wrote to the Patriarch of Constantinople to ask him and his fellow-Patriarchs to raise the Metropolitan of Moscow to Patriarchal status, suggesting that Moscow should rank in precedence below Constantinople and Alexandria but above Antioch and Jerusalem. After a little hesitation the

Patriarch Jeremias II of Constantinople sent a favourable reply, in which he suggested sending the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Russia to perform the ceremony. He thus indicated that Moscow would have to rank below Jerusalem. Nothing came of it at the time; but in 1588 Jeremias himself came to Russia, to see about the fate of the Orthodox in the Ukraine, and to gather alms. He was invited to Moscow; and there, not, it seems, without some pressure, he agreed to preside at a ceremony held early in 1589, where he enthroned the Metropolitan Job as a fellow-Patriarch. When he blessed the new Patriarch Jeremias added a blessing 'for all Patriarchs of Moscow hereafter, appointed by the sanction of the Tsar, after election by the Synod of the Russian Church'. In the documents exchanged after the ceremony the Tsar addressed Jeremias as 'Patriarch of the most exalted Throne, father of fathers': while the Patriarch wrote that: 'Since the First Rome fell through the Apollinarian heresy and the Second Rome, which is Constantinople, is held by infidel Turks, so thy great Russian kingdom, most pious Tsar . . . is the Third Rome . . . and thou alone under heaven art Christian Emperor for all Christians in the world.' The exchange showed that the Orthodox world recognized Moscow to be Third Rome politically but not ecclesiastically. It was the duty of the Tsar now to look after the Orthodox in all countries; but the primacy of the See of Constantinople was preserved. The Pentarchy of Patriarchs remained the supreme ecclesiastical authority, with Moscow replacing Old Rome, which had lapsed into heresy; but Moscow was put at the bottom of the list.

The Tsar had obtained almost all that he had wanted; but soon there followed dark days for the Tsardom and for Russia, in which the policy of the Possessors seemed to be justified. For it was the powerful and well-organized Church that maintained the government of Russia during the coming crisis. Tsar Feodor died in 1598. He was the last living member of the old dynasty of Rurik, his young half-brother Dmitri having been murdered a few years previously. Feodor's widow, the Tsaritsa Irene, thereupon handed over the government to her brother, Boris Godunov, who had been chief minister for many years, and then retired into a convent. She doubtless remembered that in

Byzantium in the absence of an Emperor the Imperial power passed to the crowned Empress, who could then nominate a successor. But it was felt that Boris's elevation must be confirmed by election. It was the Patriarch Job who organized the election and used the powerful influence of the Church to confirm Boris's appointment. But, in spite of Job's support, Boris was not popular. Many Russians preferred to accept the pretensions of the unfrocked monk who claimed to be the Tsarevitch Dmitri. Only his death in 1605 saved Boris from deposition at the hands of the False Dmitri's supporters. The False Dmitri reigned in Moscow for a year. He deposed Job and installed his own Patriarch, Ignatius. But he was a feeble ruler; and his dependence on Poles and other Catholics was resented. The people of Moscow, expressing themselves for the first time, rose against the Pretender, encouraged by the clergy. He was done to death, and his Patriarch deposed. In his place the nobles elected as Tsar the *boyar* Vassily Shiusky, who appointed as Patriarch Hermogenes, Archbishop of Astrakhan. But Shiusky commanded only limited support. A new False Dmitri appeared and after a victory over Shiusky's troops established himself at Tushino, just west of Moscow. Many dissident *boyars* joined him there, and he had the unreliable support of the Cossacks. A civil war dragged on till 1610, when Shiusky was deposed in Moscow, and the False Dmitri faded out, to be replaced by a Polish prince as candidate for the throne. The Poles invaded Russia in full force.

It was the Church, under Hermogenes until his death in 1612, which maintained order and organized the resistance. The successful defence by its monks of the great monastery of the Troitsa proved the turning-point in the war. Hermogenes seems to have been regarded as the supreme official in the state, in the absence of a Tsar. It was he who forbade any compromise with the Poles, refusing to countenance any Tsar who was not of the Orthodox faith. After his death, when the Russian nobility organized a militia, it was to Cyril, Metropolitan of Rostov, acting as Patriarchal *locum tenens*, to whom the leaders came for consultation and sent in reports.

By 1613 the Polish tide was receding, and Russia could be

reorganized. There was neither a Tsar nor a Patriarch; and it seems to have been felt that a Patriarch could not be appointed except by a Tsar.\* In the summer of 1613 a Council met, attended by representatives of the clergy, the nobility and the cities; and Michael Feodorovitch Romanov, a boy of seventeen, was elected to the throne.

The Romanov family was rich but somewhat parvenu. It did not have the blood of Rurik in its veins. But the new Tsar's great-aunt had been the first wife of Ivan IV and mother of Tsar Feodor; and his father was a man of high distinction. Feodor Romanov had been a close friend of his namesake, the Tsar, who was said to have wished to leave the throne to him as his nearest blood-relation. Not unnaturally, Boris Godunov was therefore suspicious of the Romanovs, and soon Feodor and his wife both found it prudent to retire into monastic life. But Feodor was still ambitious, in 1605, under the False Dmitri, he was appointed, under the monastic name of Philaret, as Archbishop of Rostov. Shiusky thought of making him Patriarch but then preferred Hermogenes; and Philaret went off to link his fortunes with the second False Dmitri, who appointed him rival Patriarch. But the Poles mistrusted him and put him into prison at Smolensk. The election of his son as Tsar was a tribute to his reputation for ability and probably also was intended to reconcile the *boyars* who had joined the second False Dmitri but were now disillusioned by the Poles. But the fact that Michael was an elected Tsar was deliberately played down. He was, rather, pre-ordained by God, while emphasis was laid on his kinship to the old dynasty and to Tsar Feodor's wish to pass the throne on to Michael's father.

Michael accepted the throne on condition that his father would be Patriarch. It was not till 1618 that the Poles eventually released Philaret. He was promptly enthroned as Patriarch; and, until he died in 1633, Russia enjoyed the uplifting spectacle of a father and son as Patriarch and Tsar. As Philaret was

\*It should however be noted that in 1606, after the fall of the first False Dmitri, the Muscovite representatives at the Council which elected Shiusky as Tsar had proposed first the election of a Patriarch who should head a provisional government.

physical as well as spiritual father of the Tsar and anyhow possessed a far stronger personality and a far better brain, it was not surprising that he in fact controlled the government. The Church in his person ruled Russia. He was an enlightened ruler, anxious to end Russia's isolationism and to improve education in the Church. He was also eager to combat the Poles' attempts to stamp out Orthodoxy in favour of Catholicism in the Ukraine, which they still controlled. He therefore re-established a close connection with Constantinople, and at the same time made cordial contact with the Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev, Peter Moghila. Moghila, a Rumanian prince by birth, Parisian by education, and fully in touch with Western thought, founded an up-to-date theological academy at Kiev, where the teaching was largely copied from Catholic models. A new type of Orthodox priest was emerging from it.

It is possible that Tsar Michael realized that he had given too much power to the Church in the person of his father. The two Patriarchs who followed him were men without political ambition. Joasaph (1634-1640), whom Philaret had recommended to succeed him, was a pious man who concerned himself only with Church affairs. Joseph (1642-1652) was chosen by drawing lots from six candidates suggested by the Tsar and proved to be entirely lacking in distinction. Indeed, Tsar Michael's son Alexis, who succeeded to the throne in 1645, found Joseph only too unenterprising, and obstinately obscurantist: though on the whole he obeyed the Tsar's orders. Tsar Alexis, a pious but progressive man, was determined to continue his grandfather's work in bringing the Russian Church up-to-date. Despite Joseph's protests he first invited theologians trained at Moghila's academy at Kiev to come and improve the standards of education. But he found their outlook a little too western and alien to the Orthodox tradition, some of them being even ignorant of Greek. So, under the influence of his confessor, the Arch-priest Stepan Vonifatiev, he came into closer contact with Greek thought and was greatly impressed by the learning and vision of a distinguished Greek visitor, Paisius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

It was Paisius who brought to the Tsar's notice a Russian

priest who was to become the most forceful figure in Russian ecclesiastical history. Born in 1605 of peasant stock, Nikita Minin had taught himself to read and had become a village priest. But his three children died and his wife retired into a convent, while he too took monastic vows under the name of Nikon and was for a while a hermit on the shores of the White Sea, becoming in time abbot of a monastery near to Archangel. Coming to Moscow on monastery business in 1646 he met Stepan Vonifatiev and became a member of his circle. Paisius saw him there and was struck by him; and in 1649, on the Patriarch's suggestion, Tsar Alexis appointed him Metropolitan of Novgorod, the second see in the country. At Novgorod Nikon not only acted as the Tsar's viceroy in lay matters, but he instituted a programme of far-reaching religious reforms. He had two objects. One was to bring Russian ritual and usage into line with those in the Greek Orthodox world, in order to give dignity and clarity to the services. The other was to free the Church organization from all control by secular officials, except for the Tsar alone. In 1611, in the time of troubles, the nobility had set up a Monastery Bureau, which was empowered to have jurisdiction over all the estates of the Church and their inhabitants, except for those worked by the monasteries themselves. In 1625 Philaret recovered authority for the Patriarchate over its estates, and the lands of a few great monasteries were removed from the power of the Bureau. Risings in various cities in 1648 persuaded Tsar Alexis to promulgate a new code which would centralize the whole administration; and control over Church estates was tightened again; nor might the Church acquire any further land. But by 1649 the Tsar had fallen under Nikon's spell. Stepan Vonifatiev with his more modest ideas of reform had passed into the background; and Nikon was all-powerful. Believing sincerely that the Church should work in closely with the divinely anointed monarch, he was able now to persuade Alexis that all beings and goods belonging to the Church should be under the sole control of its ministers. The Church was to achieve complete independence of the State.

By 1651 Nikon's influence over the Tsar was so great that he was able to induce Alexis to do penance on behalf of the

Tsardom at the tomb of the canonized Metropolitan Philip whom Ivan the Terrible had put to death. The previous year Nikon had informed the Tsar of a vision which he had had, promising him the Patriarchal throne; and when the Patriarch Joseph died in 1652 he was duly appointed in his place.

As Patriarch Nikon completed the ritual reforms which he had begun at Novgorod. The whole Russian Church was brought into line with the Great Church of Constantinople. The reforms were not wholly popular. The dislike that the Non-Possessors had felt for a Church that was rich and highly organized and entangled in politics survived amongst many Russians. But whereas in the days of Maximus the Greek the Non-Possessors had been the party that sought contact with the Orthodox in other lands, now their descendants resented the Graecized reforms of the Patriarch and the Tsar. They were suspicious of the books that Nikon disseminated, many of them printed in the West, as the Turks would not allow a Greek printing-press at Constantinople. Above all, they disliked alterations in the liturgy that they knew. Holy Russia, the Third Rome, had no need for reforms inspired from abroad. The Old Believers, as they were called, under leaders such as the saintly Archpriest Avvakum, sullenly refused to conform with the official hierarchy. They had considerable popular backing; and their suppression was only achieved by long-drawn-out and often very brutal punishment. In the end many of them preferred to burn themselves to death, rather than submit.

Meanwhile Nikon was determined to raise even higher the power of the sacerdotium. In 1653 he published a work called the *Kormchaya Kniga*, the Book of the Helmsman. In it he maintained that the Church organization was entirely independent of the State and under the sole authority of the Patriarch. The role of the Orthodox Tsar was to see that the security and independence of the Church was unimpaired. Nikon made great use of Byzantine law texts, of which his knowledge was wider than his understanding. He cited the Donation of Constantine, which was generally accepted as genuine in the Orthodox world; and it seems probable, to judge from certain analogies that he used, that he had studied the works of Western

medieval pontiffs such as Innocent III. He derived many of his arguments from the ninth-century Byzantine law-code known as the *Epanagoge*. This declares that the Emperor and the Patriarch are partners. The Emperor is the sole interpreter of the civil law, which he must respect; and it is his business to decide issues on which there is no existing law. He cannot touch canon law and the decrees of the Oecumenical Councils, which the Patriarch alone can interpret. While the Emperor is honoured by no divine analogy the Patriarch is called 'the living and animate image of Christ, by deeds and words typifying the Truth.' But the *Epanagoge*, as we have it and as Nikon had it, is only the draft of a code made for the Emperors Basil I and Leo VI by the Patriarch Photius. The Emperors never endorsed it; and it represents the views of an ambitious cleric, not of general Byzantine opinion. Later Byzantine canonists such as Balsamon held very different views. Nikon also quoted passages from other Byzantine law-codes which he interpreted in the same light. He cited from Justinian's Code a passage which placed the *sacerdotium* above the *imperium* and from Leo III's *Ecloga* a passage stressing that the Imperial power came from God. Neither Justinian nor Leo, each of them exceptionally high-handed in their dealings with the Church, would have recognized his use of their words.

The Tsar had thoroughly approved of Nikon's reforms; and up till 1657 Nikon still enjoyed his confidence, acting both as guardian of the Imperial family and president of the Council when Alexis was away campaigning. But when Nikon began to claim all the honours enjoyed by Philaret, who had been after all the actual father of a Tsar, and assumed the title, borne by Philaret, of *Veliki Gosudar*, Great Sovereign, Alexis was alarmed. He was not prepared to treat the Patriarch as an equal, indeed, slightly superior, partner. In the summer of 1658 he snubbed Nikon by omitting to ask him to a banquet in honour of the King of Georgia; and when Nikon protested he ceased to attend services at which the Patriarch officiated, giving as his reason Nikon's assumption of the pretentious title, though Nikon claimed that the Tsar had bestowed it on him. Four days after the Georgian banquet Nikon publicly announced that he was

retiring from the Patriarchate. He calculated that the Tsar would find him impossible to replace and that public opinion would ensure his triumphant reinstatement. He retired to a monastery to await his recall. But the Tsar would not recall him unless he gave up the offending title. For the following eight years Nikon fought in law-courts and Church councils to recover his position, blocking the election of another Patriarch and even for a time reoccupying the Patriarchal Palace from which he was with difficulty ejected. At last, late in 1666, on the advice of a visiting Greek prelate, Paisius Ligarides, Metropolitan of Gaza, the Tsar summoned a Council to which he invited the older Patriarchs. The Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch came in person. Paisius Ligarides represented Jerusalem, and five Metropolitans represented Constantinople. Nikon refused to recognize a Council summoned by a lay autocrat, though the Occumenical Councils had all been summoned by the Emperor; and he maintained that the Patriarch of Constantinople had approved of all his actions. This was true of his ritual reforms, which the Council gladly endorsed. But both traditional theory and practical interest persuaded the Patriarchs that Nikon had gone too far and that the Tsar must be supported. Nikon was formally deposed and the election of a new Patriarch of Moscow, Joasaph II, was confirmed. The right of the ecclesiastical organization under the Patriarch to manage its affairs without lay interference was maintained; and the Tsar undertook not to change the laws, customs or ritual of the Church; but his ultimate authority over the Patriarch was clearly if not explicitly upheld.

Nikon lived on in retirement in a monastery till 1681, but played no further part in history. He was the most formidable personality that the Russian Church ever produced. But the reaction that he provoked was to be disastrous to Russian Orthodoxy; for in the next generation it convinced the most formidable lay ruler that Russia produced, Peter Alexeivitch, that the Church must be kept under strict secular control.

Things moved smoothly in the Church for the rest of Tsar Alexis's reign. The Patriarch Joasaph and his successor Pitirim were unambitious men, whose co-operation was rewarded by the

gift of further endowments to the Church. In 1674 Alexis appointed a more vigorous Patriarch, Joachim, but died early in 1676, before Joachim had revealed his character. During the reign of his weak and sickly son Feodor the Patriarch Joachim emerged as the chief power in the state; and when Feodor died in 1682, leaving the throne jointly to his feeble-minded brother Ivan and his ten-year-old half-brother Peter, Joachim assumed the regency. He planned to dethrone Ivan as an imbecile and to retain the regency until Peter came of age. But he was outwitted and ousted by Ivan's forceful sister Sophia, who governed as regent until she in her turn was ousted by Peter in 1689, when he was aged seventeen.

Peter Alexeivitch, to be known in history as Peter the Great, was, unlike his contemporary compatriots, a man with very little feeling for religion. He knew of his father's experience with Nikon. As a boy he had seen Joachim's attempt to seize power. During the early years of his reign his annoyance with the Church authorities was enhanced by their refusal to countenance his attempts to divorce his innocent young wife. His travels in Western Europe showed him how the Church was governed in Lutheran countries as a tidy administrative department controlled by the monarch and the secular state. But he was aware of the potential strength of the Russian Church. In civil affairs his reforms were rapid and impulsive; with his ecclesiastical reforms he moved cautiously. Early in his reign the Muscovite clergy, backed by Greek intellectual visitors such as the Likhoudes brothers, finally eliminated, or so they thought, the influence of the school of Kiev, with its more Western and legalistic outlook. They were wrong. Peter realized that he could make use of the Ukrainian clergy; but for the moment he held his hand. The Patriarch Joachim lived till 1690, on chilly terms with the Tsar. On his death the Holy Synod, backed by the Dowager Tsaritsa, refused to elect the candidate whom the Tsar was known to favour; but Peter graciously accepted their choice. The new Patriarch, Adrian, tried at first to assert once and for all the right of the hierarchy to control all ecclesiastical affairs, quoting at length from Nikon's *Kormchaya Kniga*. Peter made no active protest then; but when Adrian died in 1700 the Holy Synod was

not allowed to appoint a successor. Instead, they were forced to accept a Ukrainian cleric, the Abbot Stepan Yavorsky, as 'Exarch of the Holy Patriarchal Throne, Supervisor and Administrator of the Church of All the Russias'.

Yavorsky and his fellow-Ukrainians were delighted to have triumphed over the Greco-Muscovite party in the Church; but they were soon alarmed by the lengths to which Peter went. In December, 1700, exactly two months after Adrian's death, he issued an Imperial Ukaz which abolished all ecclesiastical courts. Next, he began to confiscate all ecclesiastical and monastic property. The Bureau of Monasteries, set up in 1611 and reconstituted as a sort of register of monastic properties in 1649, as part of Nikon's earlier reforms, had been suspended under the Patriarch Joachim in 1677. Peter now revived it as a department of state, giving it the duty of administering Church courts, Church property and the collection of Church taxes. He then subjected the Bureau and the whole hierarchy to the supervision of Imperial *fiskalyi*, 'inspectors' or 'inquisitors', who were to look into matters not only of administration and organization but also of faith and conscience. The Exarch Stepan Yavorsky, as *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate, acquiesced in all this, maintaining that the Tsar was autocrat over Church and State alike, and eulogizing him as being 'the true helm and image of the Faith', and 'as an eagle in his unattainable height of sacred lineage and divine birth, tracing his descent from God Himself'. But the whole hierarchy was increasingly unhappy. In 1712 the Exarch himself protested against the 'inquisitors' in a public sermon, and in 1715 he publicly demanded that the Church should be allowed to keep control over its spiritual life.

By that time he had lost what little influence he had held over Peter. The Tsar had used the Ukrainian clergy to crush the Church of Moscow with its grandiose traditions and, having succeeded in it, he had no further use for them. It was, however, another Ukrainian, Theophanes Prokopovitch, appointed Bishop of Pskov in 1718, who helped him to finish off the reduction of the Church. Theophanes had studied in the West and had been influenced by Lutheran juristic thought. How much he was actively responsible for the system now adopted in Russia, or

how much the scheme was the Tsar's is uncertain. Probably Theophanes carried out in detail the Tsar's general instructions. Early in 1721 a series of Imperial edicts regulated the whole status and administration of the Church. The lay government had already been reorganized under a number of ministries known as 'colleges'. Now the Patriarchate was formally abolished and authority over the Church given to a Ministry of Religion, the Clerical College, which was later usually called the Holy Governing Synod, though it bore little resemblance to the traditional Holy Synod of the Patriarchates. It was composed of twelve clerics, three of whom had to be bishops, the appointment of all the members being strictly controlled by the Tsar. Its duties comprised the supervision of all ecclesiastical administration and matters of religious discipline and doctrine. But it was itself supervised by an Imperial official, the Ecclesiastical Procurator, or Chief Inquisitor, a layman whose inspectors operated in every ecclesiastical province, to see that the directives of the Clerical College were carried out. The inspectors had the further task of seeing that heretics, such as the Old Believer *raskolnitsi*, were removed from the authority of the Clerical College and sent to trial before the civil courts. Only law-suits that concerned Church discipline and practice were left to the ecclesiastical courts. All other matters came under the Ministry of Justice. Church properties were transferred to the College of State lands. The salaries of all ecclesiastics, from the Metropolitans to the parish priests, were to be paid by the State.

Earlier Tsars, and Byzantine Emperors before them, had claimed to be the supreme authority over the Church as well as over the State. In the Byzantine tradition inherited by the Russians it was the Emperor alone who gave the force of law to legislation, whether lay or ecclesiastical. It was for him to summon Councils of the Church if articles of faith were called into question. He had the accepted right to confirm high ecclesiastical appointments and to order such matters of practical ecclesiastical administration as the rearrangement of dioceses to suit contemporary needs. But he was bound by the Law. He could interpret it and supplement it where it was deficient, but it remained something greater than he was; and in religious

affairs there was also the Tradition of the Church, unwritten and often undefined, and of that public opinion considered the Church authorities to be the guardian. Russia did not have the same respect for the Law which Byzantium owed to its Greco-Roman background and its long line of cultured lawyers. The Russian Tsars had for a long time past claimed to be supreme autocrats under God alone, from Whom their power was derived, and to be therefore overlords of the Church; and many Russian churchmen had agreed that the will of the Tsar was synonymous with the will of God. But hitherto no Russian Tsar, and certainly no Byzantine Emperor, had considered himself to be empowered to interfere in the traditional structure of the Church, as it had been handed down from the past, or to brush aside accepted canon law or to pronounce on doctrine without the support of a Council. Peter when he claimed to represent God on earth was claiming nothing new. It was the use that he made of the claim that was revolutionary and utterly alien to the Orthodox tradition.

From the point of view of the Tsars the effect of Peter's reforms was highly satisfactory. The Church henceforward was to be in no position to challenge the Imperial will. The hierarchy was reduced in size as well as in power and wealth. The number of clerics was restricted. Supernumerary priests were offered material advantages to unfrock themselves, and the number of entrants into monasteries was strictly controlled. Salaries, for bishops as well as for priests, were kept low; and clerics were not encouraged to play any part in community life outside of their religious duties.

It could well have been argued that the Russian Church would be in a healthier state if it were stripped of its earthly riches and ambitions. The Non-Possessors and their heirs had always urged such a cleansing. But to strip the Church of its power to put it under the close control of government officials was a very different matter. Spiritually it suffered greatly. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated in the history of Russian icon-painting. Till the last decades of the seventeenth century this was still a great art, following old traditions but by no means stagnant or retrograde. Then the disastrous influence of the

Ukrainian clergy with their self-conscious interest in the West began to show itself. Icons began to become clumsy copies of provincial Italian art. But even that bastard art could hardly survive Peter's reforms. It was only in far-away villages and monasteries, to which the inquisitors seldom penetrated, and in the persecuted and dwindling communities of the Old Believers that humble examples of the ancient tradition were still produced. In the cities religious art was almost entirely restricted to the grandiose, occidentalized decoration which ornamented the cathedrals built by Emperors and Empresses for their own greater glory.

The eighteenth century was in consequence a period of drab humiliation for the Russian Church, in many ways more destructive of its morale than even its experiences in the twentieth century were to be. It is true that religious observance was encouraged by the State. The public was expected to attend church services; but the services were intended to give the worshippers a proper reverence for the rulers of Holy Russia rather than any feeling of spiritual exaltation. The great ceremonies of the Court were, as in Byzantine times, liturgical ceremonies, but they lacked now any spiritual content. The governmental classes, eager to show their Western enlightenment, despised the superstitions of the poor and ignorant, but at the same time made no effort to see that the poorer clergy were properly educated: while in the seminaries where the higher clergy were trained the teaching was done for the most part in Latin and the emphasis was on scholastic and German philosophical thought. Clergy so trained were ill suited to minister to the Russian temperament. The Communist slogan that 'religion is the opiate of the masses' is not unjustified if it is applied to the policy of eighteenth-century Russian governments.

In spite of the attempts to dragoon it Russian spiritual life survived, and underwent a renaissance in the nineteenth century. But its leaders now were almost all of them outside of the hierarchy. It was, rather, the *starets* to whom the people listened. The sainted monk Tikhon of Zadonsk (1724-1782) was the first teacher to revive the Orthodox spirit in Russia; but by far the greatest influence in the revival was that of Saint Seraphim of

Sarov (1759-1833), whose monastic cell in the forests of central Russia became during the last decades of his life a centre to which pilgrims came in thousands to hear the old Orthodox teaching. Monastic life was revived by Paisy Velichkovsky (1722-1794), though he had to go outside of Russia, to Moldavia, to do so. He was for thirty years abbot of Niamets; and shortly before his death he published a Slavonic translation of the *Philokalia*, a collection of Orthodox spiritual and mystical texts compiled a few years previously by the Athonite Nicodemus the Hagiorite. This translation had an enormous effect on Slav intellectual thought. The work of both Seraphim and Paisy was carried on in the nineteenth century at the monastery of Optino Pustina, near Tula, which from 1829 to 1923 was administered by a series of *staretsi*, unconnected with the official hierarchy, but men of high culture and intellectual power. It was to Optino that the great nineteenth century Russian thinkers and writers, such as Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Soloviev came for spiritual refreshment.

The authorities did not approve. Even the mystical-minded Tsar Alexander I preferred mysticism of a more modish Western type. The reactionary Nicholas I appointed as Ecclesiastical Procurator an authoritarian cavalry officer, General Protasov, who tried to run the Church with military discipline. Happily for the Church the Metropolitan see of Moscow was held from 1821 to 1867 by a remarkable cleric, Philaret Drozdov. His *Catechism* is probably the best existing statement of Orthodox doctrine; but his theology was at the time thought to be a little too liberal both by the Procurator and the Imperial authority and by the monks at Optino. He supported Optino against the disciplinary measures demanded by General Protasov, to whom he tactfully yielded on matters that were of lesser importance, but whom he was not afraid to oppose on major issues, as when he openly declared that doctrinal decisions pronounced by the Clerical College had no canonical validity. Philaret also tried to identify the Church with social reforms. He had little success under Nicholas I; but his proud moment came when he was asked by Alexander II in 1861 to draft the Imperial law freeing the serfs.

The nineteenth century saw also a remarkable outburst of missionary work which Russian priests, backed by Philaret but with no encouragement at all from the Procurator or the Clerical College, launched in Siberia and even so far afield as Alaska and Japan. The first of the great nineteenth-century missionaries, the Archimandrite Macarius (Glukharev, 1792-1847), a monk brought up in the mystical tradition of Paisy Velichkovsky, was continually in disgrace with the Procurator. But his contemporary, Innocent, Bishop of Kamshchatka, (born Ivan Veniaminov, 1797-1879) lived long enough to see missionary work made respectable under the more enlightened Tsar Alexander II, and eventually succeeded Philaret as Metropolitan of Moscow.

This unofficial revival of religion in the Byzantino-Russian tradition had a great effect on the intellectuals of the so-called 'Slavophil' school. Gogol gave up writing novels and plays to explain to his compatriots the liturgical mysticism of the great Byzantine theologian, Nicolas Cabasilas. Dostoevsky's conversion was real and profound, as was Tolstoy's, though at the same time he resented it, and his relations with the Church were tinged with hostility. Lesser known outside of Russia was Alexis Khomiakov (1804-1860), a poet, painter, linguist, historian and engineer, whose works on the Orthodox tradition and his insistence that the official hierarchy could not speak for the whole Church caused his books to be banned in Russia during his lifetime. In a later generation there was Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900) probably the greatest of Russian philosophers, who, after a Positivist youth, had the unusual experience of a mystical vision in the Reading Room of the British Museum and devoted the rest of his life to religious philosophy. He was a pioneer in oecumenism, believing that in a united Christendom the Orthodox Church, the Church of St John, should provide the mystical and contemplative elements, the Catholic Church, the Church of St Peter, the active, practical elements, and the Protestant Churches, the Church of St Paul, the intellectual elements. At first his outlook was optimistic, but his last work, published shortly before his death, was gloomily apocalyptic. He foresaw the coming of Antichrist in the guise of a godless dictatorship, which would endure until the few surviving Christians of all



denominations came together and won freedom: which would coincide with the end of the world. This visionary outlook had a great influence on the Russian Symbolist poets, notably Alexander Blok. Soloviev's earlier works led to a new philosophy of Orthodoxy, developed by a group of ex-Marxists, whose leaders were Berdiaev, Bulgakov, and Struve, all of whom lived on into the 1940s.

The Christian intellectuals were not liked by the Church authorities. It was not surprising, perhaps, that Tolstoy was excommunicated; but even the pious archimandrite, Feodor Bukharev, Gogol's friend and supporter, was forced to retire from the priesthood because of his intellectual interests. Dostoevsky's view on monasticism were considered too humanistic even by the monks of Optino, who had inspired many of them. On their side the intellectuals had little use for the official hierarchy and its directors. The best illustration of their attitude is given in Dostoevsky's 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor', in *The Brothers Karamazov*: where the Inquisitor meets Christ and points out to him the merits of a properly run Church which will satisfy man's material needs and release him from the burden of freedom which he is incapable of sustaining. It was such an attitude that turned the Christian intellectuals into revolutionaries.

The authorities were also irritated by less intellectual revivalists who began to appear in the later nineteenth century. The most prominent of these was the parish priest known as Father John of Kronstadt (1829-1908). But even many of the intellectuals were perturbed by Father John's somewhat hysterical enthusiasm and by such practices as public confession, at which every member of the congregation simultaneously shouted out his sins. Father John was a remarkable man, a great preacher, devoted to the care of the poor and sick, and gifted with healing powers. But he set a dangerous precedent. His most celebrated disciple was Rasputin.

Had Alexander II not been assassinated by an anarchist, the Church might have won more freedom. During his reign, the State control was eased, and, thanks to the posthumous influence of Khomiakov, education in the seminaries was broadened and

humanized and at the same time linked to the older tradition. But Alexander III was as reactionary as his grandfather, Nicholas I, and was determined to keep the Church subservient. Nicholas II was more sympathetic; and his wife, the Empress Alexandra, had the fervent piety of a convert. But neither her intellect nor her judgment was strong. She preferred the religion of the school of John of Kronstadt to that of Soloviev; and she fell into the hands of Rasputin. In 1905, after the defeat of Russia by Japan, the reforming Chancellor, Count Witte, planned to give more independence to the Church and to restore the Patriarchate. But the Tsar was incapable of standing up to his reactionary civil servants. Nothing was done. The Church remained in bondage.

As a result all the thoughtful elements in the Russian were opposed to the Tsarist régime. The peasants might still regard the Tsar as the Little Father, the figurehead of Holy Russia, but they had no liking for their hierarchs. The best of the clergy and the best of the lay Christians followed the tradition of the old Non-Possessors and sighed for ecclesiastical freedom. They were ready to support revolution against the Tsarist autocracy when the time should come.

## IV

## THE PRESENT PROBLEMS

For most of the Orthodox Churches the turning-point in modern history came at the end of the First World War, with the Revolution in Russia and with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the growth of Arab and Turkish nationalism. For the Balkan Churches the pattern was slightly different. The Balkan peoples won their independence in the course of the nineteenth century; and their position, with the partial exception of the Bulgarians', was improved by the Balkan Wars and the First World War. It was only at the end of the Second World War that their Churches had to face a new threat. Only Greece then escaped domination by the Communists; and Greece now has her own problems.

It was unfortunate for the Balkan Churches that Balkan independence was achieved at a time when the great Orthodox power, Russia, ran her Church as a department of State. In all the Balkan countries, and especially in Greece, the Church had played a leading part in the movement for liberation. Indeed, it had been far more active in the war than the older Orthodox tradition would have permitted. It was poorly rewarded. When Greek independence was established and the authority of the Oecumenical Patriarchate was repudiated, the Church in Greece was organized roughly on the lines of the Russian Church of the time, with a Holy Synod, controlled by the State, in charge, under a Government Procurator; and, as in Russia, it became an impoverished and neglected department of the state. But

there was less interference in its internal organization than was the case in Russia, and the monasteries were left alone, only losing some of their lands when the larger estates were broken up. The politicians tended to ignore it, except occasionally when the pro-Russian party sought to use its influence. The first King of Greece, Otto of Bavaria, was a Catholic with an Evangelical wife. The second, George I, was a Danish Lutheran; but his marriage to a pious Orthodox Russian Grand-Duchess, Olga, helped to make religion more fashionable. By the terms of the Constitution the heir to the throne had to be Orthodox; and Crown Prince Constantine married a Prussian princess who soon became a convert to Orthodoxy, to the shocked disapproval of her brother, the Kaiser. Despite official indifference the average Greek remained devoted to his Church. The devotion was often narrow-minded. Attempts to publish a translation of the Bible in modern Greek caused riots, even though one of them was inspired by Queen Olga; and the adoption of the reformed calendar in 1920 was bitterly opposed.

The thirty-three bishops of the Church of independent Greece declared themselves to be autonomous under the Archbishop of Athens in 1833. The Patriarchate refused to recognize the autonomy at first. It was only in 1852 that the Oecumenical Patriarch Anthimus IV sanctioned the autocephalous status. By that time, owing to the indifference of the secular government and the hostility of the Church towards King Otto's rule, the number of bishops had fallen to four. In granting autocephaly the Patriarchate insisted that the Greek government should see that an establishment of at least twenty-four bishops was maintained but that there should be no governmental interference in the running of the Church. After the Balkan Wars, when Northern Greece, that is, Macedonia and Epirus and parts of Thrace, and Crete became integral parts of the Kingdom of Greece, they were not put under the Archbishopric of Athens but remained under Constantinople, as did the islands of the Dodecanese when they were united with Greece after the Second World War. As these dioceses come under the civil law of Greece, the rights of the Patriarchate have in practice been limited to consultation

over the appointments of the upper hierarchy and such matters as the redistribution of dioceses.

Monastic life has steadily declined in Greece, except in the women's houses, many of which still attract recruits and do valuable social work. The decline in the monasteries is particularly noticeable on the Holy Mountain, Mount Athos, the monastic republic, where the great monasteries, shorn of their former estates, attract few recruits and find it hard to maintain their life. But otherwise there was a remarkable revival of religion in Greece in the twentieth century. The theological school of the University of Athens was greatly improved; and though most of the older professors were trained in Germany, with an arid outlook hardly in harmony with the mystical tradition of Orthodoxy, much useful theological work has been produced there: while the newer University of Thessalonica has an excellent theological school. The revival was also due to the foundation of brotherhoods dedicated to what might be called 'home missionary' work. There is the official *Apostoliki Diakonia*, 'Apostolic Service', which devotes itself to such mission work; but far more influential is *Zoe*, a brotherhood founded in 1907 by a remarkable monk from Megaspilaion, Eusebius Matthopoulos. Its members, numbering less than 150, are mostly laymen, though they take temporary vows of celibacy. They devote themselves to evangelical work, stressing the need for bible study, for frequent communion and for schools of catechism. They have produced modern translations of the Bible and aim at modernizing the Liturgy. But they have little sympathy with the mystical tradition of the Church and they preach a somewhat narrow puritanism and are suspicious of the intellectual world. During the last World War the whole Greek Church, bishops, priests, monks and laymen alike, played an eager part in resisting the foreign invaders, though they suffered as much as did the collaborationists at the hands of the Communists.

The seizure of power by the Colonels in April, 1967, has altered the relations of Church and State in Greece. The Colonels are sympathetic with the *Zoe* movement; and they clearly wish to use the Church to support their conception of the State. One of their first actions was to depose, with doubtful

canonicity, the Archbishop of Athens and to appoint in his stead a former member of the *Zoe* brotherhood, Hieronymos Kotronis, who had been of recent years Chaplain to Queen Frederica, to whom his advice does not always seem to have been wise, and who had no hesitation in transferring his allegiance.\* They have deposed the most distinguished hierarch in Northern Greece, Panteleimon of Thessalonica, on the excuse of a slander that had been discredited several years previously. This was done uncanonically, without the consent of the Patriarch. There has been continual governmental interference in the running of the Church, quite contrary to the guarantee given to the Patriarchate in 1852. Religious education is encouraged. New churches have been erected. The authorities are genuinely anxious to support the Church, but only if the Church does what they order and gives unqualified backing to their régime. The result is a state control of the Church which is in excess of the ambitions of any Byzantine Emperor and only paralleled by the state control exercised by the Tsars of eighteenth-century Russia. Though Greece is now the one fully Orthodox country left in the world, and though the Church still means a great deal to the average Greek, it is hard to believe that religion in Greece will benefit in the long run by its subjection to the wishes of dictators.

Of the other Balkan countries, the Church in Serbia had one advantage in that the rival dynasties that sat on the Serbian throne were both native and Orthodox, even though the Obrenovitch family were committed to an Austrian alliance and therefore subject to Catholic influence, and the ultimate triumph of the Karageorgevitch family, with its purer Orthodox leanings, was accomplished by a peculiarly nasty murder in 1903. The Serbian Church was recognized as autonomous by Constantinople in 1831, but only received a full autocephalous status in 1879. As in Greece the nineteenth-century statesmen in Serbia

\*According to the rules of the *Zoe* Brotherhood, no member should accept any hierarchical position. It is surprising that Archbishop Hieronymos accepted the Archbishopric. It is also surprising that a canonist as distinguished as he is should countenance a number of apparently uncanonical acts.

were anxious to show how Western and how free from superstition they were, and in consequence treated the Church with contempt. The Serbian Church, however, produced one formidable Archbishop, Mihailo Johanovitch, who governed it from 1859 to 1898, with eight years of exile from 1881 to 1888, who saw that it was freed from too much state control, and who tried to raise its intellectual standards, in so far as its poverty allowed. The Balkan War brought Serbia additional territory in the peninsula, and after the First World War Serbia was merged into Yugoslavia, which included the old kingdom, Montenegro and the former Austro-Hungarian provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. This added nearly three million Orthodox to the Serbian Church, though the Catholic Croats and Slovenes were also incorporated in the new kingdom, and relations between the two Churches were not always happy. In 1920 the head of the Serbian Church was raised to Patriarchal rank and at the same time there was a marked rise in clerical education, largely due to a Macedonian bishop, Nicholas Velimirovitch of Ohrid, who founded a brotherhood, not unlike *Zoe* in Greece, known as the *Bogomolci*, who concentrated on religious study circles. The Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia played a gallant part in resisting the invaders during the Second World War; but its sympathies were with General Mihailovitch and the Royalists, not with Tito, whose triumph brought in a period of persecution. Matters became easier after Tito's breach with Russia. The Serbian Church authorities have now to declare their loyalty to the State, but otherwise are left alone to manage their own affairs. The churches are full for services; but in the country districts, where religion is strongest, there is neither the money nor the personnel to maintain all the parishes. The monasteries are declining, with few new recruits; but, as in Greece, there has been a revival of monastic life among women. In 1959, against the wishes of the Serbian Patriarchate, the Church of Macedonia was given autonomy by the State; but whether this was done to weaken the Church by subdivision or merely to satisfy the local nationalism of the Macedonians it is difficult to say. Despite its poverty and the need to bow down to the godless State it seems that the Serbian Church will survive.

Its present position is not unlike that of the Orthodox under the rule of the Sultan.

Montenegro deserves a passing mention. The Montenegrans, into whose small but wild territory the Turks never penetrated, long regarded their bishop as their ruler; and from 1697 to 1851 the country was ruled by a Prince-Bishop of the Petrovitch family, each being succeeded by a nephew. This happy solution of the problem of Church and State was ended by Prince Danilo (1851-1860), who refused to take holy orders and married. Having no son, he was succeeded by his nephew, Nicholas, who proclaimed himself King in 1910 but was forced to leave the country after the First World War, in which his sons had played an inglorious part. Montenegro was then annexed by his son-in-law, King Peter I of Yugoslavia; and the Montenegrin Church, which had been granted autonomy by Constantinople in 1799, was merged into the Serbian Church.

In Bulgaria the struggle for ecclesiastical liberty against the Greeks had been almost as intense as the political struggle against the Turks. Once freedom was achieved its influence could not be ignored. It was the staunch ally of the pro-Russian party in the State and was able to insist in 1895 that the heir to the throne, the son of the Catholic Prince, Ferdinand of Coburg, and his Catholic wife, should be converted to Orthodoxy at the age of two; and forty years later this convert, by then King Boris, who had married a Catholic Italian princess, found it prudent to bring his children up from the outset as Orthodox. But the Bulgarian Church in general remained poor and ill-educated, and isolated, as none of the older Orthodox Churches recognized its unilateral declaration of independence from Constantinople. It was only in 1945 that Constantinople acceded to the formal request of the Bulgarian Church to be granted autocephaly; but the more recent assumption of a Patriarchal title by the head of the Church, the Exarch of Bulgaria, has only been endorsed by the Russian Church.

When the Communists took over Bulgaria in 1944 the Church lost its official status as the established church. Religious instruction ceased; and priests were expected to join an Association, affiliated to the Communist 'Patriotic Front'. The Exarch

Stefan's protest led to his dismissal in 1948. A law in 1949 gave the State control over the Church's finances, its appointments, the education of priests and the holdings of services in the open air. In 1951, however, a measure of self-government was restored to the Church, and in 1955 the Association of Priests was dissolved. Taxation of Church property has been reduced and religious publications permitted. There is now a seminary for educating priests at Sofia which produces not only theological journals but also religious books for children. The churches are well attended throughout the country. It seems that the lay authorities have abandoned any serious attempt to stamp out religion; but the hierarchy is very careful to emphasise its loyalty to the régime; and it keeps a close liaison with the Russian Church.

The Rumanian Church, thanks to the Phanariot princes, was at the beginning of the nineteenth century the richest and the most cultured of the Balkan Churches. Under the native princes of the first half of the century the Greek elements were removed, but standards remained high. The establishment of the united Kingdom of Rumania in 1862 led to the confiscation of much ecclesiastical property, particularly of those belonging to foreign institutions such as the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the monasteries of Athos; and the proceeds were used to pay inadequate salaries to the clergy. With a King, Charles of Hohenzollern, who was Catholic by religion and an autocrat by nature, with an anti-clerical government and with ruling classes who were mainly francophil and either freethinkers or converts to Catholicism, the Church was despised and neglected, the bishops being governmental appointees. In 1885 Constantinople recognized the autocephaly of the Rumanian Church; and the establishment of a theological faculty at the University of Bucarest in 1890 helped to restore standards. The accession of King Ferdinand in 1915, which meant the accession of his wife, Queen Marie, an English princess with a Russian mother and a sympathy with Orthodoxy, gave the Church royal patronage. The union of Transylvania with the Kingdom after the First World War brought the Transylvanian Orthodox into the Rumanian fold and made the Rumanian Church the second

largest Orthodox Church after the Russian. The head of the Church was accorded the title of Patriarch by the Oecumenical Patriarch in 1925. Till the outbreak of the Second World War the Rumanian Church increased its influence and improved its standards. The Patriarch ranked in the State above the Prime Minister; and during the first minority of King Michael the Patriarch Myron acted as Chief Regent. But its reputation was not helped by the emergence in the 1930s of a movement known as the Iron Guard, which insisted on membership of the Church for its members but which was frankly fascist and committed acts of terrorism such as the brutal murder of the most distinguished of Rumanian scholars, Nicholas Iorga, and which eventually seized power and allied the country with Hitlerian Germany.

The Communist government set up by the Russians in Rumania at the end of the Second World War was, foreseeably, hostile to the Church, which was stripped of most of its possessions and made entirely subservient to the State. But there has never been a formal act separating the Church from the State. The existence of the Church as a unified body with its own head is mentioned in the Constitution. The State controls all upper appointments in the hierarchy, and every priest on receiving a cure takes an oath of allegiance to the 'People's Republic'. But there has been no active anti-religious campaign. The churches are well attended. The monasteries flourish and receive recruits: to such an extent that in 1959 the State was alarmed and imprisoned the leading members of the monastic movement; but they were soon released. There are eight religious seminaries and two institutes of higher theological studies in the country. A number of scholarly religious periodicals appear. The Church still retains some of its property. Priests and bishops are treated with respect, and the Patriarch is a figure of national importance. It is, indeed, largely due to the skilful diplomacy of the present Patriarch, Justinian, appointed in 1948, that the Church enjoys its comparative tranquillity and prosperity. He was already in touch with the Communists before the War and has found it possible to reconcile Marxist ideology with the Orthodox faith. The Rumanian Church is the most subservient

to the State of all the Churches behind the Iron Curtain and at the same time the most active in educational and spiritual enterprise. It is a little hard to accept the dual standard that enables the hierarchs to combine eagerly expressed loyalty to the secular Marxist state with an equally eager concern for the welfare of the Church. But perhaps this is a legitimate interpretation of the distinction between Caesar's things and God's; and, for the moment at least, the results are not unhappy. There is no reason for doubting the sincerity of the Rumanian hierarchy. It may be that this is a move towards the appearance of a sort of Christian Marxism that will blend modern political fashions with the old tradition and be in the end of benefit to all Christendom.

There is a small Orthodox Church in Albania which has been autonomous since 1937, which used to number about 300,000 souls. It is difficult to find out how it is faring under the present Albanian regime. The Orthodox Churches in Poland and in Czechoslovakia, largely composed of former Uniates of the Eastern rite, though nominally autonomous, are nowadays under the control of the Moscow Patriarchate. Each now has a Russian at its head. The Church of Georgia, in the Caucasus, which is one of the oldest national churches in the world, dating from the early fifth century, was originally under the Patriarchate of Antioch, then under that of Constantinople, winning its autocephaly under its Catholicus in the eleventh century. In 1811, when Georgia was annexed by the Russian Tsar, the autocephaly was suppressed; and from 1817 for exactly a hundred years the Church was ruled by an Exarch appointed by Russian Synod. Autonomy was restored in 1917; but in 1921 the Russians reoccupied the country and installed a violently anti-clerical Communist régime. The Catholicus was put to death and his successor exiled. Churches and monasteries were stripped of their property and many of them razed to the ground. The situation eased after the last War, but accurate information is hard to obtain. The Church seems to be disliked by the Russians as a symbol of Georgian nationalism; and it is deliberately kept in an impoverished and disorganized condition.

The ancient Patriarchates of the East have their own problems. The weakening of the Patriarchate of Constantinople

after the Greek rising in 1821 gave them more independence; but the collapse of the Ottoman Empire added to their difficulties, with the triumph of a new spirit of nationalism in the Levant. The Patriarchate of Alexandria, which canonically is in control of all the Orthodox in the African continent, remained for many centuries essentially Greek. The native Egyptian Christians being almost all Copts by religion, its congregations were chiefly composed of Greek merchants settled in Egypt and spreading southward through the continent. The Greek colony in Egypt and the Sudan was rich, as it controlled the cotton trade and enjoyed the privileges given to foreigners in Egypt till recent times. Now the nationalist policy pursued by the Egyptian and Sudanese governments has caused most of the Greeks to leave the Nile valley and has lost for the Patriarch his richest adherents. The Patriarchate stays on in Cairo, to which it moved from Alexandria in the early seventeenth century. It still commands the allegiance of Greek settlers all over Africa and of Orthodox Syrian and Lebanese immigrants to Egypt. But its role may be changing. Some of the emergent African countries, searching for a form of Christianity that is not tainted by a Western imperialistic past, are taking an interest in Orthodoxy, as being historically venerable and as providing a canonical chief hierarch who lives in Africa and who, though at present a Greek, need not canonically be a Greek. Students from Uganda can be seen at theological seminaries both in Greece and in Rumania; and discussions on Orthodoxy have taken place in West Africa. It is impossible to foresee whether this interest will produce practical results; but it may provide a new role for Orthodoxy in Africa.

The Patriarchate of Antioch, whose headquarters have been since the later middle ages at Damascus, has weaker links with Constantinople than the other Patriarchates. Its congregations are Arabic-speaking, using an Arabic liturgy, and its Patriarchs with few exceptions have for centuries been native Syrians. It has long been the poorest of the Patriarchates. During the nineteenth century the weakening of Ottoman rule led to occasional persecution by local Muslims, and also to depredations by Protestant missionaries, mostly American, who, failing to make any impact

on the Muslims, turned their attention to the local Christians, to whom they offered social and material as well as spiritual rewards. They now number about 175,000 souls in Syria, where they are the largest Christian community. Though they are still somewhat despised by many of the Muslim ruling classes they have identified themselves with the Arab cause and have played a leading part in the formation of the ultra-nationalist party, the Baath. In the modern Lebanon the Orthodox number about 150,000, under the autonomous Metropolitan of Beirut, who acknowledges the Patriarch of Antioch as his superior. They form the second largest Christian community in the state and traditionally provide the Foreign Minister in each successive government. Unfortunately, relations between the Metropolitan of Beirut and the Patriarch are seldom good; and the Patriarchate is further troubled at present by schism. Recent Patriarchs have co-operated closely with Moscow and are said to receive financial help from Russia. But as they are in great need of money and no one else offers them subsidies, their acceptance of Russian gifts is not surprising.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem, considered at one time to be the most agreeable of the Patriarchal sees and formerly well endowed with property, especially in Rumania and Russia, has been in difficulties in recent years. For centuries a Greek upper hierarchy dominated an Arabic-speaking congregation; and it was only after the British authorities under the Mandate had set up a Commission whose findings were implemented by the government of Jordan, that the congregation acquired a proper voice in Church affairs. The Patriarch and most of the Holy Synod are still Greek, but native influence is increasing and will probably soon dominate the Patriarchate. Its financial position has steadily worsened since the loss of its European properties; and a period of mismanagement of its estates in the early twentieth century was followed by the troubles in Palestine, which added to its difficulties. The congregations under the Patriarchate number about 200,000 souls of which the majority live west of the Jordan. They suffered great material loss during the Zionist invasion and again in the recent Six Days' War; and many migrated to Lebanon or further afield. The com-

munities beyond the Jordan are loyal citizens of the Kingdom of Jordan and enjoy full civic rights. In Palestine the Orthodox communities, centred chiefly round Jerusalem and Bethlehem, are uncertain of their future. Many of their younger folk are extreme Arab nationalists and are to be found in the ranks of the Arab commandos.

The Church of Cyprus is independent of any Patriarchate, having been granted complete autonomy, as the Church of Saint Barnabas, at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Under the Byzantine Emperors it was in practice administered from Constantinople; and under Crusader and Venetian rule the authorities tried to insist on its submission to the Latin hierarchy. Under the Ottoman Sultans it regained autonomy, but was closely supervised by the Constantinopolitan Patriarch, until the mid-eighteenth century, when the Cypriot Archbishop was placed under the Grand Dragoman, the senior lay Christian official at the Sultan's Court. This lasted till the Greek rising of 1821, when the post of Grand Dragoman was abolished, and when the Archbishop and many of his followers were put to death for suspected complicity in the revolt. Subsequent archbishops recovered the right to be *ethnarch*, head of the Orthodox community in the island. When the British occupied the island in 1878 their authorities, being ignorant of history, continually snubbed the Archbishop's claim to speak for the Greeks of Cyprus. This ignorance contributed largely to the troubles of recent years. But the ethnarchy has triumphed. Now in Archbishop Macarius we see the one modern hierarch outside of the Vatican city who is a Head of State.

The smallest of the autonomous Orthodox Churches is composed of the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai and its fourteen tiny daughter-houses. It was founded by Justinian in the sixth century, and since the tenth century its Abbot has worn the title of Archbishop of Sinai. He is traditionally consecrated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem; but in 1575, after unseemly bickerings between Jerusalem and Alexandria over the control of the monastery, the Patriarch of Constantinople declared it autonomous; and eventually in 1782 the other Patriarchs concurred. The monks are now dwindling in numbers;

and the geographical position of the monastery, with its daughter houses for the most part in Egypt while Sinai is under Israeli occupation, casts uncertainty over its future.

The Oecumenical Patriarch, the Patriarch of New Rome which is Constantinople, is still the senior hierarch in the Orthodox world. But the history of the Patriarchate throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is melancholy. The Orthodox *millet* in Ottoman Turkey survived its disasters in 1821 and the peace which ended the Greek War of Independence; but its autonomy was inevitably whittled down by the legal and fiscal reforms introduced into the Ottoman Empire during the first half of the nineteenth century, which aimed at securing equality and uniformity of treatment for all subjects of the Sultan, without regard to race or creed. During the century the Patriarch lost control of the national Churches of Greece, Serbia, Rumania, and Bulgaria. With Greece his relations were particularly delicate, since till the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913 the majority of Greeks still lived in the Sultan's dominions and therefore under his religious jurisdiction. But, small though the Kingdom of Greece was, its lure was great. Most of his flock looked to Athens, not to Constantinople, for cultural guidance. He still ranked as a high Ottoman official. At the National Assembly which Sultan Abdul Hamid was forced to call in 1909 he was there, dressed in his full canonical robes, as were his Armenian colleague and the Chief Rabbi, each representing his flock. But the Young Turk movement was anti-religious as well as nationalistic; and the Balkan Wars put the Orthodox in Turkey in a difficult position. Though the territory ceded to Greece at the end of those wars remained nominally under his spiritual control, he was left in effective control only of the Orthodox colonies in Constantinople itself and in Asia Minor. The Allied occupation of Constantinople in 1918, after the end of the First World War, raised expectations that the city would be internationalized, while many Greeks hoped that it would be given to Greece to be the capital of a revived Byzantium, with the Patriarch as its spiritual head. This hopeful dream was shattered by the disasters of the Greek war against the Turks in 1922 and by Kemal Ataturk's entry

into Constantinople—or Istanbul, as the Turks demand that it should be called, preferring the popular Byzantine name for the city to the official name which the Byzantines seldom used. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 guaranteed that the Patriarchate should remain in Istanbul and that the Greek minorities there and in the environs should not be disturbed; but the Greeks of Asia Minor were all ejected, together with colonies of Christian Turks, some of which were the descendants of Turkic mercenaries employed by the Byzantines before ever the Seljuk Turks entered the country. The Patriarch's flock is thus greatly reduced. About twenty years ago the Greek population remaining in Turkey was estimated at about 50,000. But many Greeks have since then left Istanbul. The Turks resent their presence and that of the Patriarchate there and show their resentment in demonstrations and periodical riots; and feelings have been embittered by the problem of Cyprus. Apart from the authority, little more than nominal, which he has over the Churches of Northern Greece, Crete, and the Dodecanese, the Patriarch's strength today lies largely in his canonical position of being the head of all the Orthodox Churches in Europe which do not have an authorized autonomous Patriarch or Archbishop of their own, that is to say, of the Orthodox communities in Britain, France, and Germany, and elsewhere in Western Europe, and of the Orthodox Churches in the Americas and in Australasia. In fact most overseas Slav and Rumanian communities have their own self-appointed autonomous heads; and the Patriarch's authority is in practice restricted to the Greeks and such Russians as refuse to acknowledge the Patriarch of Moscow. But the Greek communities are wealthy and influential. When the present Patriarch was elected in 1948, being then Archbishop of America, he was flown to Turkey in President Truman's own aeroplane.

It is perhaps helpful to the international standing of the Oecumenical Patriarch that he is not the subject of any Orthodox state. Living enisled in a Muslim country he can afford to be impartial over quarrels that may arise amongst the Orthodox. But his relations with the Turkish secular state are delicate and difficult. The Turks insist, not unreasonably, that he must be or must become a Turkish citizen and that his election must be



confirmed by the Turkish government. But they would prefer him not to be there at all. In spite of occasional deliberate provocation and innumerable pin-pricks the present Patriarch, Athenagoras, has always behaved with perfect correctitude towards the Turkish authorities and has won their grudging respect. Under his wise and benevolent rule the prestige of the Oecumenical Patriarchate has been greatly enhanced; and the broad vision and practical enthusiasm that he has shown in the Oecumenical movement have made him a figure of great international significance, universally admired except by some Greeks who feel that anyone of Greek blood should be more nationalistic. So long as he lives the Patriarchate will survive. But its future is uncertain. There are rumours that the present Greek government is planning a deal with the Turks by which the Patriarchate will be moved to Athens or elsewhere in Greece. Such a move would be uncanonical. It would be contrary to the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne. It would damage the Oecumenical movement, which has never been popular amongst the hierarchs of the Church of Greece; and the Patriarch would no longer be acceptable as the chief spokesman of the Orthodox world. It is also unlikely that all the Orthodox congregations overseas would willingly continue their allegiance to a Patriarch who had fallen into the power of the present rulers of Greece.

The future of the Oecumenical Patriarchate is of essential concern to all the Orthodox. But its problems are overshadowed by the problems that face the Russian Church. In 1917 the Orthodox living in the Russian Empire far outnumbered all the Orthodox living elsewhere in the world. Its sheer size made it the most important of the Orthodox Churches. What has happened to it now?

When the Russian revolution first broke out in 1917 the more vital elements in the Russian Church were ready to welcome it. They had no particular wish to abolish the monarchy, which had always had a place in Orthodox tradition; but they had no great liking for the Tsar and the Tsaritsa who had discredited Orthodoxy by their patronage of Rasputin, and they longed to

free the Church from the shackles imposed by Peter the Great. The Church did not play any active part in the actual revolution, but it accepted the government of Kerensky without demur. The Procurator General whom he at once appointed, Prince Lvov, was a liberal who dismissed from the Holy Synod all hierarchs who had been associated with Rasputin and instituted the free election of bishops by the clergy of the see; and he prepared for the summoning of a Council of the Church, such as had not been held since before the days of Peter the Great. Lvov retired in July 1917. His successor, Professor Kartashev, at once gave up the hated title of Procurator, becoming instead Minister for Religion. He summoned the Council, which sat from August to November 1917, and again from January to April 1918. It was dominated by moderate liberals, led by Prince Evgeni Troubetskoy and the ex-Marxist theologian, Bulgakov. Laymen representing the Universities and Academies and the Duma were invited to attend. The Council elected a new Holy Synod, and in October it voted to restore the Patriarchate. On 5 November 1917 Tikhon, Metropolitan of Moscow, a man of humble origin, was elected Patriarch.

But in the meantime the October Revolution had taken place and Lenin and his fellow-Communists were in power. The Church had long hoped for a liberal revolution which would restore its freedom and would enable it to return to the old ideal of the Non-Possessors. It would become a purely religious and moral force divorced from politics, economics and purely secular social questions. Such a divorce was not easy. Moral issues come too often into modern politics; and the triumph of the Communists involved many such moral issues. The Communists on their side had been taught by Marx and Engels that religion was necessarily used by the ruling classes to act as a check on the working classes. While this was perhaps true of the Russian Church under Tsarist control it did not apply to the liberal Church that was now emerging in Russia, based on popular support and repatterned on a democratic system. The clash between the two points of view was therefore somewhat confused.

In spite of his wish to keep clear of politics, the new Patriarch,

almost on the morrow of his enthronement, issued a message to the faithful condemning civil war and denouncing 'false teachers who seek to bring about universal brotherhood by universal war'. The Communists interpreted this as an attack on themselves; and Tikhon's refusal to encourage revolts against the régime did him little good. In December 1917 the landed estates and farms of the Church were confiscated; and a few days later all Church schools and seminaries were closed. On 20 January 1918 a decree was issued separating Church and State. The Church was not only disestablished but stripped of all its property and all its legal rights. Freedom of worship was allowed; but as church buildings and furnishings, even communion plate, were now the property of the State, worship was not easy to maintain. A number of pious folk, laymen and laywomen as well as priests, were killed trying to preserve sacred icons or sacred relics from destruction. The aged arch-priest Peter Skipetrov was shot while trying to defend the property of the monastery of Alexander Nevsky; and on 22 January 1918 the Metropolitan of Kiev, Vladimir Bogoyavlensky, was murdered outside the cell where he was living. Some of the clergy tried to preserve sacred objects by transferring them to secular benevolent societies; but this loophole was soon closed.

The government seems to have been surprised by the popular support given to the Church. Even though Tikhon publicly excommunicated the enemies of the Church and sent a stern message bidding Lenin cease from bloodshed, and though he denounced the Peace of Brest-Litovsk as a betrayal of Russia and her allies, there was a respite in official persecution, though a number of individual bishops and priests were imprisoned or killed. The government was preoccupied with civil wars and with famine. Many priests joined the White Russian armies and after their defeat fled, if they survived, to join the multitude of refugees that had escaped from Russia. The Patriarch disapproved of their actions; but in 1921 he appointed to Metropolitan rank Bishop Eulogius Georgevsky, who was acting as head of the Russian Church in exile. The efforts of the Church to help in famine relief were snubbed by the government. When Tikhon ordered the parishes to sell their remaining non-consecrated

possessions and devote the proceeds to help the starving, the authorities retorted by demanding the cession of consecrated vessels as well. Tikhon's protest against this demand led to his imprisonment in May 1922.

During the enforced absence of the Patriarch a group of clergy, mostly married secular priests, occupied the Patriarchal Chancery. They called themselves the 'Living Church', and pledged themselves to abolish the Patriarchate and to reduce the power of bishops, to ban monasticism, and to give full support to the Soviet government as being 'the only rule in the world that achieves on earth by governmental means the ideals of the Kingdom of Heaven'. As a reward they received the help of the police in eliminating opponents within the Church. The Metropolitan of Leningrad, Benjamin, a man beloved by the work-people in his diocese, was falsely accused by members of the 'Living Church' of seeking to prevent the State's seizure of church treasures. He was condemned and shot, along with three companions. By the end of 1923 sixty-six bishops had been imprisoned or deported to Siberia, and 2691 secular priests, 1962 monks and 3447 nuns put to death.\* In the late spring of 1923 the 'Living Church' held a Council which should force its views on the whole Church. But before the Council's decisions could be implemented the Soviet authorities changed their policy, partly perhaps because they realized how little popular support was given to the 'Living Church', and partly perhaps, because they were at that time seeking to improve their foreign relations, and the arrest of the Patriarch had aroused protests abroad. In June Tikhon was released, after signing a declaration confessing his errors against the government and declaring that he had not been tortured. The tone of the declaration casts doubt on the second statement. He annulled the decisions of the Council of the 'Living Church' and re-established the authority of the Patriarchate. Members of the 'Living Church' who repented of their rebellion were received back into the fold. The unrepentant were condemned as schismatics.

\*These figures, which cannot be verified, are given by N. Struve in his *Christians in Contemporary Russia* and are based on information supplied by a former member of the 'Living Church', Bishop Nicolas Solovei.

The 'Living Church' continued to exist for some time, under the name of the 'Renewed Church'. It held several congresses which pressed for liturgical and administrative reforms; and it won some support from Churches on the perimeter of Russia and outside. Protestants in particular attended its Congresses, in the fond belief that here was a Russian Reformation. Despite fitful and half-hearted encouragement from the government it disintegrated after 1926.

Tikhon died in April 1925; and 300,000 people marched in his funeral procession. He had scrupulously avoided making any political statement in his later years; and he was said to have left a Will in which he bade the faithful accept the régime and fight against its enemies.\* Knowing that the Church would not be permitted to call a Council to nominate his successor, he appointed three bishops to carry on the administration and elect a new Patriarch. Two of them were in exile in Siberia; so the third, Peter of Krutitsy, carried on the administration till he too was sent to Siberia in December 1925: when he handed over his authority to Sergius, Metropolitan of Nijni Novgorod, a repentant former member of the 'Living Church'. Sergius was forbidden to come to Moscow and had to govern the Church from Nijni Novgorod. He avoided making political pronouncements and tried to keep the Church free of State control. He was arrested in December 1926. On his release the following March he entirely altered his policy. In July 1927 he issued a statement announcing his full support of the Soviet régime and ordering his bishops to do likewise.

The statement came as a shock to numbers of Russian churchmen, to whom it seemed a subordination of God to Caesar. We cannot now tell whether Sergius was an ambitious cynic or whether he believed that subservience to the Communist State was necessary if the Church was to be saved. Some of his friends declared that he nobly took on his shoulders the burden of the sin of supporting Communism in order that the Church might endure. This may be so; but nearly all the older bishops, including the Patriarchal *locum tenens*, Peter, protested. Under

\*The authenticity of this Will, which was published in *Izvestia* (15 April 1925), has often been questioned.

their chief spokesman, Joseph of Leningrad, they preferred to suffer exile and in many cases death rather than conform. The Russian Church in exile under the Metropolitan Eulogius repudiated Sergius's leadership and finally, in 1931, put itself under the Patriarch of Constantinople, on the grounds that Sergius's authority in Russia was uncanonical.

Distressed as the faithful were, there was nothing that they could do, with their leaders in prison. But Sergius gained little from his attitude. An act of 1929 made it a criminal offence to preach the Gospel, to argue against materialism or to try to make converts, while it licensed anti-religious propaganda. No charitable work was permitted to the clergy, and worship was only allowed if twenty people in any locality publicly asked for it, thus exposing themselves to the attention of the police. Collectivization and the mass deportation of peasants broke up parishes. Anti-religious propaganda was at its height under the League of Militant Atheists, founded in 1925 by Emilien Yaboslavsky, born Hubelmann. Numerous churches were pulled down and relics, icons and sacred books burnt. Between 1929 and 1934 seven bishops were shot and many more deported. Then, arbitrarily, in 1934 there was respite from this intense persecution. In 1935 blasphemous carnivals, which previously had been encouraged, were banned; and Easter cakes appeared in the government food-stores. The children of priests were put on the same level as those of workers for schooling and subsequent employment; and in 1936 priests were given full rights of citizenship. This easier period only lasted until 1937, when Stalin's Great Purge began. Bishops and priests in vast numbers were amongst the purged; and it was little consolation for them to know that a great many atheists were being purged also.

It needed the war with Germany to bring better days for the Church. As soon as the news of the German invasion reached Moscow Sergius issued a statement enjoining the faithful to rally to the support of the fatherland. Throughout the war the Church did all that it could to help the nation, in preaching, in raising funds and in providing spiritual comfort where it was required. During the siege of Leningrad the courage and energy

of the Metropolitan Alexis were admired even by atheists. There was no repeal of the penal laws against the Church; but in September 1943 Stalin himself received the Metropolitan Sergius in audience and announced on the following day that a Church Council might be summoned to elect a Patriarch. A few days later the Council, composed of such bishops as were not in exile or in enemy-held territory, met and raised Sergius to the Patriarchate. At the same time a Government Council for the affairs of the Church was instituted, under the sympathetic chairmanship of Professor Karpov. Under its supervision the Church was at last allowed to re-order its life and to replan its organization to suit the needs of the time. Sergius's policy had thus paid its way. But to many of the faithful it seemed that he had won at the expense of his integrity. It was hard to forgive him when his spokesmen denied publicly that there had been any persecution of the Church except where proven traitors to the régime were concerned: or when he sent a fulsome telegram to Stalin to felicitate him on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution.

Stalin realized that the Church had been a useful support in the war effort. There was another consideration also. In the territories occupied by the Germans religious freedom had been restored. The Nazis were not noted for any particular love for Churches, but they were astute enough to see that religion was still a force in Russia. There was an immediate religious revival in the Ukraine. Where in 1940 two churches had been operating, in 1942 there were 318. (In 1914 there had been 1710.) Eight monasteries reopened. There had been three priests only in the province in 1940. In 1943 there were over six hundred, nearly half of them newly ordained, the others returning from an enforced lay life. The lesson was not lost on Stalin. The Ukrainian Church, though it had taken advantage of the German occupation, had carefully avoided active collaboration with the invaders. It could not be eliminated as a treasonable body. Stalin seems to have decided that he could not be less generous than the Germans nor entirely go back on what they had done when he had driven them back.

Sergius died in May 1944. In January 1945 a Church Council

was permitted to meet, at which Alexis of Leningrad was elected as Patriarch. At the same time the reorganization of the Church was completed and endorsed by Professor Karpov's Council. The constitution was no longer democratic. It is true that the Patriarch has to be elected by a Council of the Church; but a Council cannot be summoned without the consent of the State. Once he is elected the Patriarch has the right to appoint, transfer and depose bishops; and bishops have similar rights over the clergy of their sees. The structure is thus monolithic. But every appointment, even that of village priest, has to be confirmed by the civil authorities; and the government can issue orders to the Patriarch through the Council for Church affairs. The Church is thus admitted as having an existence, but it is under the complete control of the State, similar to the control instituted by Peter the Great, but with the difference that the State is on the one hand professedly anti-religious and therefore potentially hostile, but on the other hand for that very reason less interested in the details of the Church's life.

So long as Stalin lived the Church was allowed to exist on these terms but had to move warily. After his death in 1953 and for the next six years there was a distinct thaw. Churches were reopened and even new ones built. There had been some 5,600 active priests in 1941. In 1947 there were said to be over 30,000, and the number was increasing. There was very little governmental interference. Religious education still caused difficulties. Two theological academies and eight seminaries were opened immediately after the end of the War; but the seminaries were and are inadequate for the training of priests; and no Church schools have been permitted. But the Church was now accepted. In the universities ecclesiastical history and ecclesiastical art became respectable subjects for study. The Russians have always been proud of their medieval art. Now their art-historians could explain the religious significance of the carefully tended medieval icons.

The improvement in the status of the Church was, it seems, largely due to the government's desire to make use of it in its foreign policy. In the eighteenth century cynical rulers such as Catherine the Great, while keeping the Church in strict con-

trol at home, posed as the great patrons of the Orthodox abroad. Now the Communist government, even more cynically but more subtly, is seeking to show that Russia is still the leader of the Orthodox world. While Stalin lived, foreign contacts were limited to the Orthodox Churches. Heads of the Orthodox Churches were invited to attend the Council of 1945 which elected Alexis as Patriarch. The Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch both came and were sumptuously entertained, and made speeches in praise of the Soviet government. Other delegates were more restrained, the representative of the Oecumenical Patriarch merely congratulating the new Patriarch. After his election Alexis was permitted to visit Palestine and Egypt. In 1946 he went to Bulgaria and in 1947 Rumania. In 1947 he planned to summon a pan-Orthodox Congress to Moscow, to discuss the attitude of all the Orthodox towards the Oecumenical Movement. The Patriarchates of Constantinople and Alexandria and the Churches of Greece and Cyprus refused his invitation, on the ground that it was not Moscow's business to summon such a Congress. However, the next year he invited all the heads of the Orthodox Churches to celebrations in honour of the five-hundredth anniversary of the autonomy of the Russian Church and to a pan-Orthodox Congress afterwards. The Church leaders in Communist-controlled countries all accepted. The Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Archbishop of Cyprus refused both invitations. The Oecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Athens agreed to send delegates to the jubilee celebrations but not to the Congress. The Patriarch of Antioch eagerly attended both functions. The Congress successfully showed Moscow's domination over the Churches in communist countries; but relations with Constantinople and the ancient Patriarchates worsened owing to Moscow's unilateral and uncanonical re-ordering of the Orthodox Churches in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and the elevation of the Bulgarian Exarch to Patriarchal rank.

After Stalin's death international relations improved. Attacks against the Vatican were dropped. Protestant divines were invited to visit Russia and were entertained with honour. A few politically reliable clerics were permitted to visit Western Europe.

Moscow gave up its tight control of the Orthodox in Poland and Czechoslovakia and admitted that the Finnish Orthodox, whom it had claimed to belong to its jurisdiction, came under the Oecumenical Patriarchate, with which friendly contacts were restored. In 1958 almost all the Orthodox Churches accepted an invitation to send delegates to Moscow to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate, at which Nicholas, Metropolitan of Krutitsy, read a paper admitting the Oecumenical Patriarch's presidency of the Orthodox with regard to the Oecumenical movement. In May of that year Nicholas of Krutitsy and Michael, Bishop of Smolensk, went to Holland to discuss Moscow's affiliation to the World Council of Churches; and in March 1960 the Russian Church was formally admitted to membership. It seemed that with the blessing of the Soviet government the Orthodox in Russia were to be allowed to play a friendly part in international Christendom.

But already in 1959 the liberty given to the Church within Russia was strictly reduced. Karpov, the friendly head of the Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs, was replaced by an unsympathetic chairman, Kuroiedov. During the next few years a number of churches have been closed and several razed to the ground, seminaries have been shut down, bishops disgraced and exiled, priests deprived of their civil rights, and churchgoers placed under surveillance. In 1959 there had been sixty-seven monasteries in Russia. By 1964 only ten remained. During the same period the number of active priests was halved. The persecutions were carried out under a cloak of legality. Priests and monks were accused of breaking passport regulations, or might be summoned to do military service. Bishops were usually accused of some financial irregularity. The aged Bishop of Irkutsk was, for instance, condemned for dealing in stolen paraffin; several others were alleged to have deceived the tax-collectors. Nicholas of Krutitsy, who had been the Patriarch's chief adviser and responsible for the foreign relations of the Church, was disgraced in September 1960; and his death under mysterious circumstances at the end of 1961 convinced the faithful that he had been martyred. Meanwhile a Synod, of doubtful canonicity, convened in July 1961, reorganized the parishes,

restricting the priest's duties simply to the conduct of services and handing over the administration to councils of laymen, strictly controlled by government officials.

The foreign relations of the Church passed to a young man, the Metropolitan Nicodemus. Under his direction, while there still seems to be a desire to keep on friendly terms with the Western Churches, the Moscow Patriarchate has been trying to elbow out the Oecumenical Patriarch from his position as the accepted leader of the Orthodox in the Oecumenical movement. When the Vatican Council was summoned in 1961 by Pope John, the Orthodox Churches were invited through the Oecumenical Patriarch to send observers. He wished to accept the invitation, so long as all the Orthodox communities consented. The Russians refused to commit themselves; and at last, on the very eve of the opening of the Council, the Oecumenical Patriarch, not wishing to divide the Orthodox, telegraphed regretfully to Rome to say that under the circumstances he could not send observers. The following day, just as the Council was opening, the Patriarch of Moscow informed Rome, but not Constantinople, that he was sending observers himself. It was a coup designed to humiliate Constantinople, who was only able to send observers to the second session of the Council. Similarly, in 1970, while Rome and Constantinople were laboriously but amicably discussing problems of intercommunion, the Moscow Patriarchate suddenly announced that its priests had been ordered to give communion to Roman Catholics who might wish it. Rome was not amused and responded with a snub.

It is not possible for an outsider to explain the revival since 1959 of measures against the Church. It may be that more sternly atheistic elements came into power within the Soviet ruling clique. It may be that there was too marked a renewal of religious life in the 1950s, and the authorities feared lest the Church might acquire too strong an influence in the country. The religious were certainly far readier to speak out in defence of the faith and in protest against its persecution in 1960 than they had been a generation earlier. It still required courage to protest; but protests came now not only from hierarchs but also from humble priests and humble laymen and laywomen. Un-

fortunately the same courage has not been shown by the topmost hierarchs. The Patriarch Alexis seemed to most of the faithful to be a little too willing to yield to governmental pressure and a little too eager to inform the outside world that all was well within the Russian Church. His two chief advisers, Pimen, Metropolitan of Krutitsy, Nicholas's successor, and Metropolitan Nicodemus of Leningrad, both of them probably imposed on him by governmental influence, have been zealous in carrying out the wishes of the government, denying that there has been any arbitrary closure of churches and monasteries or any ill-treatment of the clergy. The hierarchs, such as the revered Hermogenes, former Archbishop of Ladoga, who have protested against illegalities, have been suspended and humiliated.<sup>1</sup>

It may be that Alexis was right. When he died in 1970 the position was perhaps a little easier for the Church; but accurate information is hard to obtain. It may be that a direct collision with the State would result in the complete elimination of the Church and that only a tactful pliancy will permit its survival. But can a Church ever survive at the expense of its moral integrity?

<sup>1</sup> In May 1971 Pimen was appointed Patriarch of Moscow in succession to Alexis.

V  
CAESAR AND GOD

Can Orthodoxy survive in the modern world? No one who has studied modern theology can deny that some of the finest contributions made in recent years to spiritual thought have come from Orthodox thinkers, men such as Berdiaev and Bulgakov and the scholars from the Institute of Saint Sergius in Paris. But these thinkers belong to a Church in exile. The refugees in Western Europe and the settlers over the oceans are not troubled by a hostile or a domineering state. They have their difficulties and their feuds. Amongst the refugees there is the continual problem of finance; and all of them are concerned over problems of organization. To congregations who cling to the eternal traditions of their faith historical and canonical rights are very important. The Greek overseas Churches are loyally attached to the Oecumenical Patriarchate, but of the Russians, some remain faithful to the Moscow Patriarchate, even though disliking its subservience to the Communist state. The main Russian Church in Exile in Western Europe, long governed by Archbishop Eulogius, broke with Moscow when Sergius of Nijni Novgorod bowed down to the Soviet and put itself under the Oecumenical Patriarchate. Recently the Oecumenical Patriarch has granted it autonomy, in an unappreciated gesture to show that his see has no imperialistic ambitions and to please Russian opinion. In America the various Slav and Rumanian bodies enjoy their own autonomy, as does the Syrian Orthodox Church, which contains many more members than does the Patriarchate of Antioch.

AND THE SECULAR STATE

The Moscow Patriarchate makes constant efforts to capture the allegiance of the Russian groups in America: while other Russians dream of an American Orthodox Church which should embrace all the Orthodox in the continent. But the Greeks and many of the Russians fear the idea of an Americanized Church. In the meantime there are four Russian seminaries in America which do excellent work; and the Greeks are planning monasteries and a seminary.

Orthodoxy is doing well overseas; but its future must depend on its native lands, on Greece, the Balkan states, and Russia. The Oecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul still provides a rallying point; but it is situated in a Muslim country. Its life is difficult there; but if it were moved to a Greek city or island, where it would not be able to escape the domination of the present autocratic and nationalistic rulers of Greece, it would lose its oecumenical status. The Orthodox communities in the Levant, for all their brave tenacity, cannot count for much. But they have the one advantage that their Churches are divorced from the State, which leaves them alone. In their case the problem of differentiating between the things that are Caesar's and those that are God's is comparatively straightforward.

In Greece, where at least the Government professes the Christian faith, and in the Communist-controlled countries the differentiation is far harder to make. Unless Caesar is godly can we obey him and at the same time obey God? If we follow the injunction in the Gospel are we not liable to raise a double standard? Can we support a government whose actions we see to run counter to Christian principles and at the same time remain faithful to those principles? The obvious answer is to say no; but what if the very existence of the Church is at stake? If the Church perishes it will be hard for Christian principles to survive.

Both the temperament and the experience of the Orthodox Church inclines it to divide Caesar's things from God's as far as possible. Few of the nations of Western Europe ever knew an age of persecution. Their ancestors for the most part became Christian at a time when Christianity was already triumphant. In the centuries before Constantine the Church was essentially

an Eastern sect. The memories of those early days are far more deeply engraved in the semi-conscious memory of the East than in that of the West. Again, Eastern Christendom knew nothing like the medieval Papacy. In the Byzantine period that Church was ready to leave the civil government to the Emperor, regarding him as both Caesar and as God's representative, so long as his piety and his morals fitted him for the holier role. The legacy from the Byzantine age is a desire to avoid secular commitments and an inherent respect for the Emperor or his equivalent. This legacy enabled the Greeks to survive the difficulties and humiliation of their enslavement to the Ottoman Sultan, until the time came when the nationalism which the Church by its survival had fostered became too strong; and the hierarchy had to decide whether an oath of obedience to the civil authority could be repudiated in the struggle for national and religious freedom. It was impossible to keep aloof then from a political decision.

Russia inherited the same Byzantine legacy. The formidable Patriarchs of Moscow of the seventeenth century were out of the true Russian tradition; and they had the disastrous effect of frightening the lay powers. The average Russian preferred the attitude of the Non-Possessors and their dislike for any connection with the functions of government. This, together with a Byzantine respect for the Emperor, enabled the Russian Church patiently to bear the strict secular control imposed by Peter the Great and his successors. But at least the Tsars, like the rulers of Greece today, called themselves Christians. They wished to dominate and use the Church but not to destroy it. The rule of aggressive atheists is a different matter.

Are we to withhold Caesar's things from him if Caesar is a Commissar? How should the Russian Church have acted? It is all very well from the safety of a free country to tell others that they should face martyrdom. Their own consciences must decide on that. Moreover, martyrdom is not always the noblest path to take. It is sometimes nobler still to endure humiliation if thus something of value can be preserved. It may be that the friends of Sergius of Nijni Novgorod were right when they said that he was consciously taking on the sin of submission to the atheists in order that he could secure the survival of the Church. It may

be that he and his collaborators were, and are, carrying out their duty to Caesar, unafraid of the double standard that it involves. What is happening now on earth may demand insincerity, but it is ephemeral; it is of the earth. The eternal truths and the lasting life of the spirit are not affected; for they are on a different plane. It is difficult to accept such a double standard. Even in temporal matters the faithful should surely show integrity. But only history can in days to come tell us whether the willing scapegoats in the Russian Church have not done well for Christendom.

Some few years ago the Patriarch Alexis remarked that: 'what seems to the outside world to be persecution, to us Russians is a return to the Apostolic Age'. He saw the Russian Church as being in the position of the Early Church in the time of the pagan Emperors. Let us hope that he was right, and that the Neros and Diocletians of today will pass, and there will come a new Constantine, to be, as the first Constantine was known in his city of Constantinople, the peer of the Apostles, and to usher in once more the Triumph of the Cross.



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